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STUDIES IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

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PREFACE

THIS book is not an Introduction to the Four Gospels, much less is it a Commentary on them. It is intended to be just what its title indicates: Studies. Its aim is to point out as clearly and briefly as possible what is conceived to be the main design of the Spirit of God in these precious records. Whether that design has been rightly interpreted, and whether it has been adequately set forth, it is left to the reader's judgment to determine.

In the prosecution of these Studies, many books have been consulted. References to them in the text are scanty, chiefly because it seemed undesirable to burden the pages with them. Here, however, it seems proper to mention those which have been of special help, viz.: Bellett, Jukes, Gregory, and Thompson, on the Four Gospels; and the commentaries of Wescott, Reynolds,

Alford, and Brown; the Expositors' Bible and the Cambridge Bible. No single book has been more serviceable than the little volume of President Henry G. Weston on the Gospel according to Matthew.

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INTRODUCTION

GOSPEL means good news. There is but one gospel—the glad tidings of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. From the earliest times, however, the term has been applied to each of the four narratives which together form the “four-sided gospel,” as Origen called it. In the oldest copies of the New Testament the title is simply, “According to Matthew,” “According to Mark,” etc., which seems to import, not that these are four separate works, but that the one gospel has been committed to writing by the evangelists in this fourfold account. Augustine speaks of “the four gospels, or rather the four books of the one gospel.”

Evangelical Christians hold, on what they consider good and sufficient grounds, that the four gospels were written by the men whose names they bear. The primitive Church invariably ascribed them to these four men, nor has the most laborious and searching examination shown

that the tradition concerning their authorship has ever varied. There is unmistakable evidence that in the third quarter of the second century (A. D. 150–175) these four gospels as one collection were generally received and read by Christians as Scripture in their assemblies for the worship of God.

The time of their composition cannot be determined with any degree of certainty ; it can be only approximately stated. Somewhere between A. D. 50 and 65 the synoptics, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called, were written. The Gospel by John dates from a later period. Probably in the decade between A. D. 80 and 90 it was published by the servant of Christ whose name it bears.

On taking up these incomparable narratives for study several things arrest attention :

1. No one of them nor all of them combined form a biography of Christ. This is apparent from their limits. Bagster's Bible prints the four in 82 pages, the Oxford in 104, the Revision (8vo.) in 88 pages. In the Bagster, Matthew has but 23 pages ; Mark, 15 ; Luke, 25 ; and John, 19. Less than one hundred pages are devoted to that life which at once is the most strangely human and yet the most superhuman, the most natural and yet the most supernatural that the world has ever seen. It is indeed most true that the Holy Spirit can and does place before us all

we need to know with a brevity which no human writer can successfully imitate : and this is not the least part of His glory that the written Word comes to men in a compass suited to the least amount of leisure, of capacity, and of means. But it is manifest from their limits as well as from their contents that the gospel records were not designed to be a life of Christ, else why do the evangelists pass over in silence the thirty years of our Lord's earthly sojourn ? And why, after giving a detailed account of the events and circumstances attending His birth, do they omit all reference to His life in Nazareth, save the one brief incident of His visit to Jerusalem when twelve years old (Luke ii. 42-50), and dwell exclusively on His public ministry ? It is with His redemptive work they are concerned, with His Messianic deeds and words they deal, for their one aim is to set Him forth as the promised Deliverer, the one supreme Saviour, for whose advent the saints of the olden time looked and longed, and the one in whom men must find salvation. Of all the gospels the same design may be predicated which John testifies was his aim : " And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His

name" (John xx. 30, 31). John's great purpose was to give believers the gospel of the Messiah, the Son of God, not to write a biography of Him. No less must be said of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The books they wrote are not memoirs, much less miscellanies: they form, and were meant to form, the gospel of the grace of God. They are "histories of redemption as accomplished in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Weston.)

2. There is a marked diversity between the synoptic gospels and John's. John's record stands by itself, having little more in common with the other three than the one august person who is the supreme center of all. After the reference to the testimony of John the Baptist (i. 15-18), the Fourth Gospel parts company with the synoptics and meets them but once again, viz., feeding the five thousand (John vi.) until the closing scenes are reached. With almost studious purpose John omits some of the most important events in the Lord's life. Thus, he is silent as to His birth, temptation, the appointment of the twelve, the transfiguration, the institution of the holy supper, and the agony in the garden. These and the like omissions are all the more strange when it is remembered that the writer often describes events with the most careful minuteness. This is seen more especially in

John's additions to the synoptic narrative. Thus with what graphic detail does he record the miracle at Cana, the interviews with Nicodemus, and with the woman at the well, the cure of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda, the cure of the man born blind, the raising of Lazarus, and the overwhelming display of His power in the garden.

Besides, the synoptists confine their record almost exclusively to the ministry in Galilee, though there are in them unmistakable hints that they were acquainted with his work in Judæa. Thus our Lord's words of lamentation over impenitent Jerusalem imply that He had on many occasions sought to win the inhabitants to Himself, and that they had rejected all His overtures : "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that kill-est the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37, ep.; Luke xiii. 31-35). The Lord's visit to the home of Mary and Martha which Luke records (x. 38-42), as has often been pointed out, suggests previous acquaintance with Lazarus and his sisters, while John (xi.) clearly indicates that Jesus had long known them and was a frequent guest in their house. But the synoptists are silent touching the Judæan ministry, and their silence appears to be almost of delib-

erate purpose. They seem even studiously to omit any direct reference to it. On the other hand, John certainly knew of the Galilæan ministry. In vii. 1-3 John records words which show that Galilee was the ordinary scene of Christ's ministry; but he just as studiously leaves the account of that ministry to the synoptists, and confines himself almost exclusively to that of Judæa.

Furthermore, there is obvious diversity between the synoptists and John in the method of presenting their great subject, Jesus Christ. The former are occupied mainly with His miracles, discourses, journeys, and with the opposition he encounters from the nation's chiefs which culminates in his rejection and crucifixion. John indeed does not ignore these weighty matters, and yet there is in the Fourth Gospel a halo of glory cast about all that Jesus does and teaches which is peculiar, and which marks Him off as the solitary sovereign, the heavenly stranger, the Son of God, Himself God. This appears no less in His miracles than in His discourses. If one may so express it, Jesus in John is ineffable, transcendent; and His teaching, His action, the very atmosphere with which He surrounds Himself, are superhuman, and unapproachably spiritual. An ancient writer perceived this, and named it "the Spiritual Gospel" (Clement of

Alexandria). The marvelous words of Jesus in John xvi. 28 indicate the mold in which this gospel has been formed by the Spirit of God : “ I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.” He is the heavenly stranger, the divine visitor. He is all this likewise in the other gospels most assuredly, but in John this feature in the Lord Jesus is characteristic and preëminent. Such are some of the phenomena observed when the synoptics and the Fourth Gospel are compared and contrasted. Do the differences admit of explanation ? An easy and shallow method of dealing with them is to call them real discrepancies, to charge the evangelists with ignorance and error, and to assert that the Fourth Gospel is the product of the second century, and that the apostle John was not its author. To refute the assaults of rationalists on the inspired records is no part of the present undertaking. This has been triumphantly done by the noble defenders of the word of God. Every fresh investigation, necessitated by renewed controversy, only serves to fortify and strengthen Christian belief in the genuineness and authenticity of these narratives. The apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, especially, it may be confidently affirmed, stands on grounds that are indisputably secure.

Can any satisfactory reason be offered for the

silence of the synoptics with respect to Christ's Judean ministry? Perhaps not. It pleased the Holy Spirit to order the accounts in the gospels as they are, and it is the joy of faith to accept them as they are. Still, some things may be reverently said of this remarkable silence. The hypothesis of ignorance is untenable. The cure of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (John v.), the restoration of sight to the man born blind (ix.), and the resurrection of Lazarus (xi.), produced too profound and widespread an impression to have been ignored by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John calls special attention to the effect of Lazarus' resurrection on the heads of the Jewish nation, and informs us they determined to put both Jesus (xi. 53) and Lazarus (xii. 10) to death on account of it. Besides, it seems more than probable that the apostles were present when Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man (ix. 2), and when He raised Lazarus (xi. 12, 16). It is incredible that the other evangelists as well as John should not have known of these great miracles. Why did they not record them? It may have been from prudential motives, as Prof. Upham and Dr. Reynolds have suggested. There is verisimilitude in the conjecture. The followers of Christ were from the first regarded with suspicion by the fanatical Jews of Jerusalem. The suspicion and aversion deepened into

hostility and persecution with the powerful testimony of Stephen (Acts vi., vii., viii. 1-3 ; xi. 19). It was exhibited at a later period in the violent outbreak against Paul (Acts xxi., xxii.).

Naturally their hostility would be directed in an especial manner against those who were intimately associated with Jesus, as His mother, the family of Bethany, and the cripple of Bethesda, or those who held some position of influence, as Nicodemus. Had the synoptists recorded His interview with Nicodemus, the ruler ; had they reported the resurrection of Lazarus ; had they told how Jesus had committed His mother to the care of John, they would have thereby exposed these their fellow-believers to great danger. So they were guided by the Spirit to omit all reference to them. But when John wrote, all these persons were gone, Jerusalem itself was lying in ruins, the temple demolished, and the chosen people were in exile ; and now everything relating to the ministry of the Lord in Judæa and at Jerusalem could be freely told, for all peril of the loved ones was passed. It is like our gracious God thus to shield and protect His beloved people. True, the synoptists mention Joseph of Arimathæa, and Matthew tells us he was a disciple, and Mark that he was an honorable councilor (xv. 43) ; but John informs us he was a secret disciple, for fear of the Jews (xix. 38). Besides,

Joseph's home was at some distance from Jerusalem, and therefore he would be comparatively secure.

3. Another thing challenges our attention as we study the synoptics, Matthew, Mark, and Luke—viz., their remarkable agreements or coincidences. Much of the contents is common to all three. They seem to travel the same road, to relate the same events, miracles, and discourses. In one the account may be briefer, in another more of the details may be given ; yet essentially the record is one. In some cases, particularly where our Lord's words are quoted, the agreement is verbally exact. These facts lie on the surface, and are patent to every attentive reader.

But this is not all. The substantial agreement, striking as it is, is offset by differences and divergences just as striking. Some of them may be noted. In Matthew the genealogy of the Saviour is traced from Abraham down to Joseph, and in the royal line of David. In Luke it is carried from Joseph and Heli up to David through Nathan, David's son, and thence to Adam. Mark omits it altogether. Matthew records the sermon on the mount as a continuous discourse (chapters v.—vii.) ; in Luke portions of it are found in various places (chapters vi., xi., etc.) ; while Mark makes no reference to it at all. Some of the parables are peculiar to each, ten

being found in Matthew alone, one in Mark alone, and fifteen in Luke alone. There is a long section interposed by Luke between the transfiguration and the end of the ministry (x.-xix. 10), usually designated as the Peræan ministry, which is hardly noticed by Matthew and Mark. Besides, the chronological sequence of events is not observed alike by the three. Matthew groups the sayings and miracles of the Lord in accordance with its author's plan, following the order of events only in a broad and general way. Mark is distinguished for its swiftness of action and rapidity of movement; while Luke has more of the style of the historian. Such in brief are some of the agreements and differences of these three gospels.

These and the like facts constitute the "Problem of the Synoptics." How did these narratives originate? It is one of the most intricate and fascinating of all the questions in New Testament literature. The answers to it are many, often contradictory, and in all cases unsatisfactory. It may be it will never be solved. Here are a few of the theories advanced to account for these inspired records. Some say the evangelists copied from each other; others, that there was a primitive document or documents of which each writer availed himself; others still, hold that they embody a "double tradition," or a "triple

tradition," or a tradition that may be described as multiform. Not one of these and the like theories is satisfactory. It is incredible that these matchless histories should have been constructed by what Salmon sharply calls a "liberal use of paste and scissors." The evangelists were not servile copyists ; they could not be.

Another view which has gained a wide acceptance is this, that Matthew wrote for the Jew, Mark for the Roman, Luke for the Greek, and John for the Christian Church. While there is a measure of truth in this view, nevertheless it does not satisfy the minds of many thoughtful readers, nor does it explain all the facts. Jesus Christ is the center of all revelation, as He is of God's counsels ; nations, primarily, are not. The words of Dr. Weston are weighty and true : "What, then, are the gospels ? They are histories of redemption as accomplished in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each gospel prepares the way for its successor, each telling afresh the story of the life, death, and resurrection from its own point of view, each presenting its own phase of the history of redemption in process, each beginning at a higher level than the preceding. The gospels are vitally related to one another, and the four constitute an organic whole."

Nothing better is offered as an explanation of

the agreements and differences that the synoptics exhibit than the old one—viz., that these Scriptures are essentially the reproduction of the oral gospel. From the day of Pentecost the apostles and their fellow Christians preached the gospel of the grace of God. It was in obedience to Christ's command that they did so (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19; Mark xvi. 15). It was the one great business of their lives. But it was inspired preaching, as the Lord Jesus promised (John xiv. 16, 17; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 13, 14). The apostle Peter assures us that the first ministers of the word “preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Pet. i. 12).

Now their preaching, from the nature of the case, must have consisted mainly of a recital of the great events in the life and ministry of the Lord. They had been witnesses of His deeds and sufferings which it concerned all the world to know. His teaching, His miracles, and journeys; His compassion and tenderness; His sinlessness; His death for sinners of mankind, and His resurrection, would form the staple of their instructions, as they do the instructions of missionaries in heathen lands at the present time. When the time came to give the gospel to the Church in a permanent form, they wrote it much as they preached it. The conclusion of Irenaeus is worth remembering: “Thus the apostles, simply and

without envying any one, handed down all these things which they themselves had learned from the Lord.” Every fresh examination of these inspired records justifies the words of the great Father.

The view that the written gospels are founded upon the oral gospel as preached by the apostles can hardly be said to be complete; it does not exhaust the subject. There are omissions and additions that affect these narratives in the profoundest way. Whether a satisfactory elucidation of them can be made is doubtful. Nevertheless, some light may be shed on them. There is a manifoldness and comprehensiveness in holy Scripture that no other writing possesses. The Spirit of God, who is the real author of the Bible, often combines a variety of ends and aims in what He is pleased to communicate to men.

That there is a special design in the composition of each of the gospels can hardly be doubted. The material is largely common to the synoptics, but it is employed and arranged in each in subservience to a definite plan. Once we come to see the plan, we have the answer to the question, “Why four gospels?” Christ is the one glorious theme of all. Each evangelist is more particularly occupied with some prominent feature in His complex character and offices. He seizes upon some predominant relation which He sustains

to God and to His people, and this He presses with convincing power. It is the unfolding of this particular feature in the work of the Saviour that marks the design; this that gives each gospel its character, and distinguishes it from the others.

These gospels are inseparably bound up with the predictions and promises of the Messiah contained in the Old Testament. The Bible is a unit. A theory of interpretation which fails or refuses to embrace in it all that God has revealed on any topic stands self-condemned. Any effort to explain the gospels apart from the great Messianic prophecies must end in partial or dismal failure.

The prophets have drawn an august portrait of Messiah. His person, offices, missions, qualifications, suffering, death, resurrection, and glory are described by them with a minuteness of detail which ordinarily belongs only to history. Not the least notable feature in the prophetic announcement of His advent is the number and variety of the names and titles bestowed upon Him. These may be grouped into four classes or arranged under four principal heads.

1. He is called the King (Ps. ii. 6; lxxii. ; Isa. xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxx. 9; Dan. ix. 25; Zech. ix. 9; xiv. 9, etc.). In these passages and many others of the like tenor, the kingly office of

the Messiah is made very prominent. He who is coming is a royal personage, the heavenly sovereign. Moreover, the prophets dwell much on His kingdom, its nature, its establishment, extent, duration, and blessedness. They seem never to grow weary in proclaiming the coming of the kingdom, and in recounting the glories that shall attend its ultimate triumph on earth when the Lord shall be one, and His name one over all the world. Even a cursory study of Messiah's kingship as it is presented in the prophets will convince one of the extent to which it pervades the Old Testament.

2. He is called the Servant of Jehovah (Isa. xlii. 1-7; xlix. 1-12; l. 4-9; lii. 13-15; liii., etc.). In these passages Isaiah gives him the significant title "The servant of Jehovah," and describes his glorious work with remarkable detail. (See also Jer. xxiii. 6; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Zech. xiii. 6, 7; Mal. iii. 1-4; iv. 2.) The prophets assure us that the Deliverer is the supreme Prophet of God who will declare the divine will, who shall Himself accomplish perfectly that will, and man's neglected duty; that He will fulfill every divine requirement, and meet every human need. In short, Messiah is to be the second Adam, who shall undo the ruin wrought by the first man. He will redeem His people with an infinite price, the price of His own blood (Isa. liii.).

3. He is called the Man, the Son of man (Gen. iii. 15; xxii. 18; Isa. vii. 14-16; ix. 6; Dan. vii. 13, etc.). It is distinctly foretold that in a very peculiar sense He is to be the seed of the woman, and yet the offspring of Abraham, the son of David. A veritable man Messiah must be, one who shall be incorporated with our race, the Son of Mankind, therefore the Kinsman Redeemer of all the people of God (Lev. xxv.; Ruth iii.; iv.; Job xix. 25-27).

4. He is called God (Isa. ix. 6; xl. 3-8; xlvi. 4; Jer. xxiii. 6, etc.). The prophets witness to the great truth that Messiah is none other than the Lord of Glory, that it is God himself who shall visit and redeem his people.

These four groups of Messianic titles are very intimately associated with the fourfold account of the Lord Jesus contained in the New Testament. The evangelists bring the person and the work of Jesus Christ alongside of the portrait of the Messiah as drawn by the prophets, the historical by the side of the predictive, and the two are found to match perfectly. The inspired writers show beyond peradventure that the Deliverer promised of God through the ages to the Old Testament saints has appeared in Jesus of Nazareth; that what was foretold of Him is fulfilled in Jesus; that the Redeemer has come; that the mighty redemption has been wrought; that He is

Messiah, and therefore worthy to receive His illustrious names ; He is the King, the Servant, the Son of man, and God.

The offices of Messiah embodied in these four titles appear in the four gospels. Jesus of Nazareth is herein set forth as the King, the Servant of Jehovah, the Friend and Saviour of men, and the Son of God. He is King not only in Matthew, but in all the others also. So likewise he is Servant, Kinsman Redeemer, and Son of God in each. While this is perfectly true, nevertheless, it seems quite clear to us that each evangelist appropriates the characteristic feature found in each title, and to it he gives a certain prominence which he does not to the other titles. And it is precisely this that constitutes the design or aim of a particular gospel. For design is discovered by the prominence that is given to a particular truth. We come to know the purpose or object the writer has before him by the emphasis with which he states and elaborates some central fact, by the importance which he attaches to it. That each of the four gospels has a design seems to us beyond question. These are not loosely arranged miscellanies ; much less are they intended to be a life of Jesus Christ. They are written for a very definite end ; they have one supreme object—viz., to set forth the stupendous fact of redemp-

tion through our Lord Jesus Christ, and this for the comfort and joy of faith.

Matthew's is the gospel of Israel's Messiah, the promised and predicted King. The very first verse of the book is the key to the whole. Jesus is the son of David, He is also the son of Abraham. Matthew places David first because He of whom he writes is David's heir, the glorious King in whom all the provisions of the covenant made with David are to find their ample fulfillment. The Wise Men ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The sermon on the mount is the King's manifesto, His royal proclamation. The miracles, discourses, and actions of Jesus through this First Gospel all contribute to the establishment of the fundamental truth, Messiah is come; He is Jesus of Nazareth.

Mark's is the gospel of the Servant of Jehovah, the mighty Minister of God, who does God's will perfectly on earth. The key word is "Straight-way," a term which describes activity, and energy in the prosecution of the work given Him to do. Accordingly, in Mark we find nothing about His birth, His lineage, His friends or home, and but little is recorded of His discourses, His teachings. He is in the Second Gospel the busy one, evermore devoted to the work which was given Him to do.

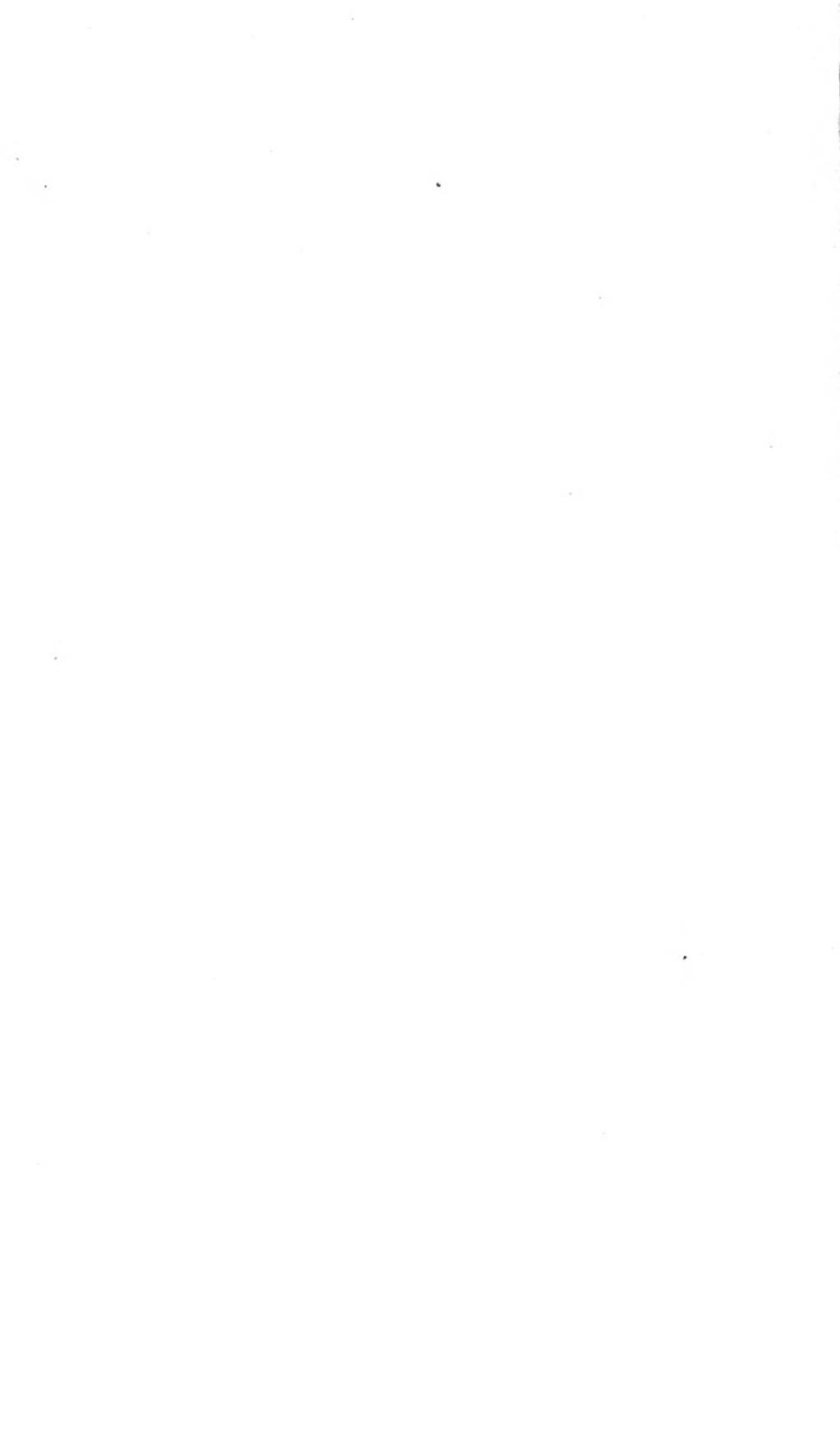
Luke's is the gospel of the Kinsman Redeemer, whose compassions go out to all sorts of people, whose pity is as wide as the race of man. Accordingly, Luke traces His genealogy up to Adam the father of the race, thus linking Him with all mankind. The key is the midnight song of the angels—the *Gloria in Excelsis*, as men have named it: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.”

John's is the gospel of the Son of God, of the eternal Logos. The Spirit so orders and shapes the record, arranges the material, and marshals the facts, as to secure His own blessed purpose. The Deliverer promised of old to the saints of God was to be the King, God's minister, the Kinsman Redeemer, that God might be glorified in the salvation of all who believe. But none other than a divine person could accomplish the mighty task. Therefore, one gospel, the fourth, is pre-eminently devoted to the person and work of the Son of God.

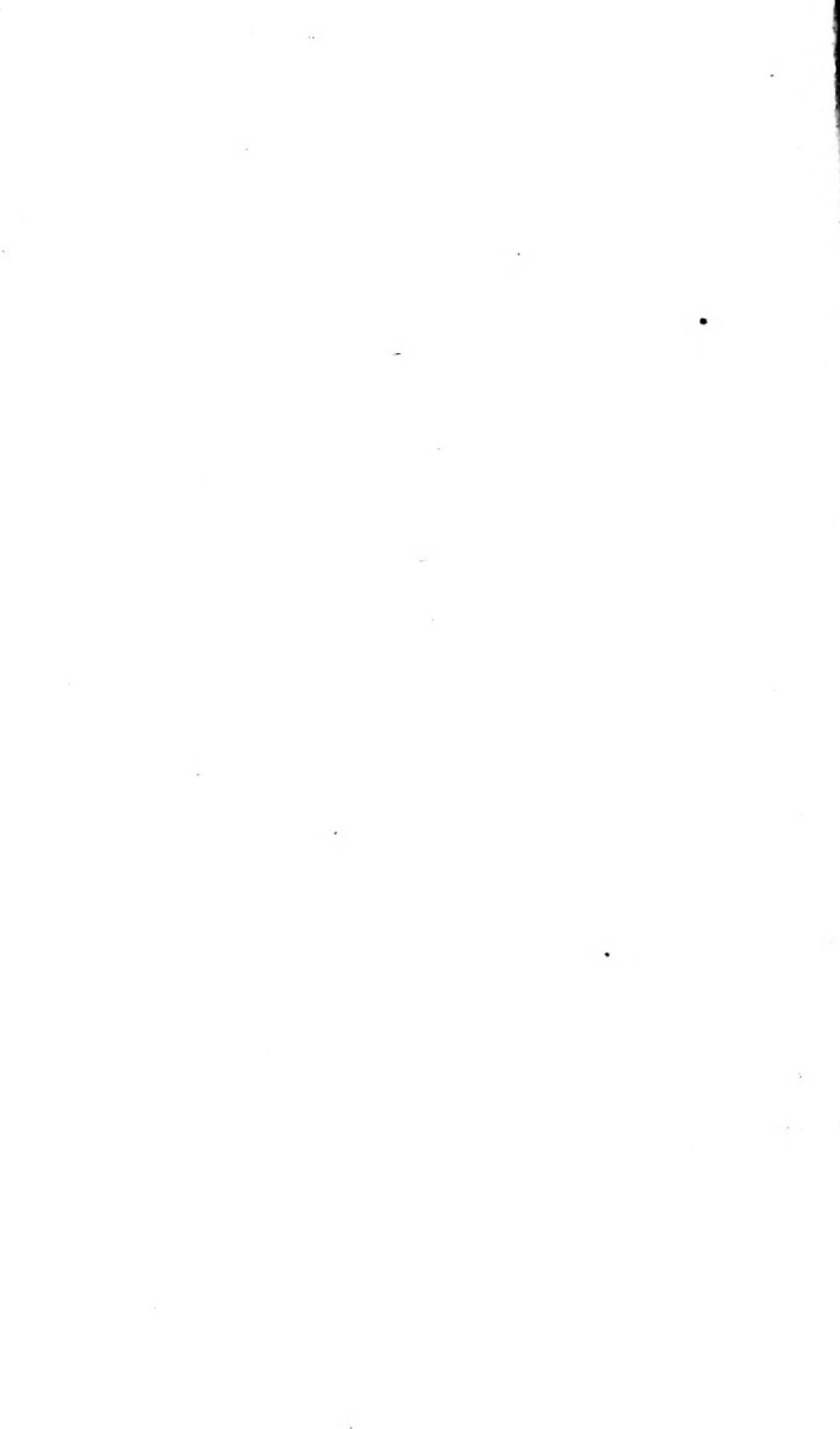
One cannot but feel that divine wisdom shines out in the choice of the four penmen. Matthew was an official of the Roman empire; and he is appointed to write of Him who is the great King, the Sovereign of the universe. Mark was a servant (Acts xii. 12; xiii. 5); and he was selected to portray Him who while Lord of glory was content to become the servant, the girded, not the

arrayed one. Luke was a physician (Col. iv. 14); and he was chosen to tell of Him who is the healer of the sin-sick and dying. And John, the beloved disciple, who leaned on Jesus's breast, was chosen to reveal Him who was "in the bosom of the Father."

There is inspiration in the choice of the theme of each gospel, and in the selection of the penmen. Some of us are still old-fashioned enough to believe in plenary inspiration, and in structural also,



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW



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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

In all the ancient copies of the New Testament Matthew's Gospel stands the first of the four gospels, and at the head of all its books. It is difficult to explain the reason for its position. It may be because it was the first written of the four, as some of the early Christian and many modern writers say. Or it may be because of the nature of its contents. Matthew is the connecting link between the Old Testament and the New. In its structure, in its wide and varied use of the older Scriptures, and in the form and construction of many of its sentences it resembles somewhat closely an Old Testament book. It binds the two Testaments together as no other book of the New Testament does. For these or other reasons it may be the Gospel according to Matthew was given the place it now holds, and always has held, in the canon.

I. The author. From the earliest times, as far back as the history is traceable, it has been uniformly ascribed to the apostle Matthew.

There is not a dissentient voice. Christian antiquity knew no other author. Doubt on the subject, or denial, is modern, and springs mainly from philosophical presuppositions and doctrinal bias. The Gospel itself offers no feeble evidence of its authorship ; it bears its own credentials. That it was written by a Christian Jew must be granted by all. The writer's intimate knowledge of the times and the events which he describes, the questions then so eagerly and anxiously debated among the Jews, their attitude toward the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and their hostility to all His work and walk ; the minute acquaintance he displays with the thoughts and feelings, the ambitions and aspirations of the apostles and disciples, betoken strongly that he was an eyewitness of what he relates, and one of Christ's company. If so, he was himself an apostle, and if an apostle, then he was Matthew, and no one else.

Throughout the Gospel he receives the name Matthew and no other. Even when called to be a disciple he is thus designated (ix. 9). In the corresponding places in Mark (ii. 14) and Luke (v. 27) he is called Levi. The same person seems to be meant. Probably his original name was Levi, and upon his call to be an apostle (x. 3), or thereafter, he took the name Matthew, which signifies "The gift of Jehovah." Such changes

of name were common—*e. g.*, Simon into Peter, Saul into Paul, Nathanael into Batholomew. Mark tells us that Levi was “the son of Alphæus.” It has been conjectured that Levi’s father was the same as Alphæus the father of James the apostle (Matt. x. 3). If so, then Matthew and James were brothers. But it is not probable, for the two are not named together in any list of the apostles, whereas brothers are generally grouped together there. An incidental mark of authorship is appended to his name in chapter x. 3, in the phrase, “Matthew the publican.” In the lists of the apostles given in Mark (iii. 18) and Luke (vi. 15), the distinguishing epithet is not employed; Matthew alone introduces it, and it is his sign manual.

A publican was a collector of imposts under the Roman government. Matthew, however, was stationed at Capernaum, which was in the the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas. Accordingly, he exercised the office under that ruler, which was one degree better than if he had been a publican directly under Rome. Still, Herod was Rome’s creature; and hence the publican under his rule was almost as odious as any other. For the vicious system, wherever prevailing, led almost of necessity to dishonesty and extortion. Publicans were cordially hated by the public generally. They were regarded as the enemies of society and

traitors to the cause of Israel. They were shunned as outcasts, unfit for the companionship of the upright and the patriotic. It was the sneer of the Pharisees that Jesus who refused to act according to their code received sinners, and even ate with them (Luke xv. 1, 2). "Publicans and sinners" is a phrase we often meet with in Scripture, and it is significant. Of no social standing, and commanding no respect, the publicans made company of those who, like themselves, were outcasts and "sinners." To this class Matthew belonged. Luke records (vs. 27-32) that after his call Matthew made a great feast for Jesus, and "a great multitude of publicans and others were sitting at meat with them" (R. V.). We learn from the account who those "others" were—viz., "sinners," verse 30. They were the only persons, probably, who would be found at a taxgatherer's table. The Pharisees were deeply offended that our Lord should mingle with such "company." No respectable Hebrew would dare attend such a feast—a company of worthless folk, ostracised and excommunicated. What an outrage on social and religious decency! By two brief but telling statements, one a quotation from the Old Testament, Jesus effectually put to silence the carping critics.

II. Did Matthew write his Gospel in Hebrew (or Aramaic, the dialect of Hebrew spoken at the

time in Palestine), or in Greek, or in both? This question is not asked with a view to its discussion, but only for the sake of a remark that is deemed important. The majority of the early Christian writers affirm with considerable unanimity that there existed a Hebrew Gospel by Matthew. Disbelief in a Hebrew original is entertained by many modern writers, while its existence is the belief of many others. The question is not yet settled, far from it, nor will it be until further light is had. That the Greek Gospel by Matthew is an original and not a translation is susceptible of strong proof, almost amounting to a demonstration. It bears every mark of being an original, and nothing scarcely of being the work of a translator. Our Matthew "stands on precisely the same footing as the other gospels: it is cited as early, and as constantly as they are." The conclusion of Alford is that also of the most devout and reverent students of the New Testament—"We have thus to consider the First Gospel on the same ground, and to judge it by the same rules, as the Second and Third Gospels." We may come to its study, therefore, with the confidence that we have here that which it pleased the Holy Spirit to give us through the apostle Matthew.

III. Structure of the Gospel. The book is carefully composed, and its contents are arranged

with the most marvelous exactness and skill. Order growing out of a preordained plan and well-defined purpose characterizes it throughout. "There is not a sentence in it but is in its logical place, not one that is not a link in the chain," (Weston). The plan molds the style, governs the structure, and knits the parts together into perfect unity. This feature, so uncommon in books, is not to be attributed to the official training which Matthew received, nor to the business habits he acquired while engaged as a collector of taxes. No man, no matter what his education or his experience, could ever, unaided, have written such a book as this. Its real author is the Spirit of God. Of course, it is quite true that the penman was fitted by his training to be a serviceable instrument for the Spirit's use; but this is all that can be affirmed of it.

The book falls into three parts. Part I. The genealogical descent, birth, and events attending it, chapters i., ii. Part II. The public or official work of Jesus, and manifestations of his Messiahship, chapters iii.-xvi. 12. Part III. Preparation for the crucifixion and resurrection. Parts II. and III. are each preceded by a time note and a significant event. The baptism is the notable event that introduces Part II. (iii. 16). The mark of time is, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom

of heaven is at hand" (chapter iv. 17). Jesus' baptism was fraught with the deepest lessons and with the most momentous issues. Only a few of these need now be mentioned. (1) It authenticated the mission and ministry of John the Baptist. (2) It was "to fulfill all righteousness," *i. e.*, every ordinance and requirement. Jesus' supreme mission was to do the will of God. (3) It meant identification with his people. "It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). John's baptism was unto repentance for the remission of sins. But Jesus had no sin to confess, and none to be remitted (Heb. vii. 26). Why, then, is He here? It is of grace—the source and channel of everything in Him. He is one with His people, and He will identify Himself with them even in submitting to the ordinance for repentance and remission of sins. (4) It was to induct Him officially into his ministry. At the Jordan, centuries before, God had magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, as the successor of Moses (Josh. iii. 7). He was but a dim shadow of the true Joshua-Jesus. Here again at the Jordan God magnifies the Lord Jesus by the gift to Him of the Holy Spirit, and by His own audible voice announcing His good pleasure and His delight in Him, thus acknowledging and sealing Him as his Son, His Servant, and Messiah (John i. 33; iii. 34; vi. 27). Isaiah had predicted that the Spirit

of the Lord should rest upon the Messiah, and so qualify Him for His mighty task (xi. 2 ; lxi. 1, 2) ; and at His baptism the promise is fulfilled (cp. Luke iv. 17-19). Baptized by John with water, baptized with the Holy Spirit without measure, He goes forth to encounter and conquer the adversary in the wilderness, and to accomplish the mighty mission for which He was sent into the world. “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (Luke iv. 14,) and began the Galilæan ministry.

Part III. is likewise introduced by a time note and a notable event (chapters xvi. 13-xxviii.). The mark of time is the following : “From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up,” (xvi. 21, R. V.) This is the first distinct prediction in Matthew of the Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection.

The event connected with this third part of the Gospel is the transfiguration (xvii. 1-9 ; verse 9 of this chapter again announces His resurrection). The transfiguration was intended to illustrate more than one great truth. (1) It was a supernatural exhibition of the essential glory of Christ. The dazzling splendor with which His person glowed was not external or reflected, not

something put upon Him ; it was His own ; it dwelt within Him, though commonly veiled from human sight ; was the display of the infinite perfection that necessarily belonged to Him as the Son of God. (2) It was a symbolical representation of His power and coming. So Peter, one of the witnesses of it, explains it (2 Pet. i. 16-18). (3) It was to confirm the prophetic Scriptures. The deep lesson that Peter gathered from this marvelous scene he has himself forcibly stated : "And we have the word of propheey made more sure ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. i. 19). The disciples had a firmer hold on the prophetic word after the transfiguration than ever before ; so should we. (4) It was to "inaugurate the sufferings of Christ, and to set Him apart as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world" (Dods). The three who were the witnesses of His transfiguration were likewise witnesses of His mysterious agony in the garden. Nor is it too much to say that the one scene is closely associated with the other. Luke reports a word that formed the topic of the conversation which Moses and Elijah had with Him in the mount—"deeease," exodus, *i.e.*, His departure from the world. But in His exodus he would accomplish such a deliverance as that

effected through Moses, save that His would be the glorious reality, while that was no more than a dim and distant shadow. In view of that blessed exodus toward which He was now turning His face with solemn and deliberate determination, the Father again, as at His baptism, audibly attests His delight in Him : "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him," (xvii. 5).

There are therefore two well-defined stages in the ministry of Christ, according to Matthew. In the first stage (chapters iii. 13–xvi. 20), the Lord proclaims the kingdom of heaven, works the signs and wonders proper alone to the Messiah—wonders and signs that confirm and establish His doctrine touching the kingdom, and Himself as the King. Then at the close of it He takes account with His disciples of the result of His labors and testimony : "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am ?" (xvi. 13–20). In the second stage, He addresses Himself to the solemn, awful event of His crucifixion (xvi. 21–xxviii.). In the first, the kingdom is made most prominent, is pressed upon the chosen nation with unparalleled earnestness and power. In the second, the kingdom perceptibly recedes, and becomes at length the subject of prophecy and the object of hope (chapter xxi. xxiii.–xxv.). The cross looms upward on the dark horizon ever more distinctly and vividly, until the tremendous

deed is done. In the one, the King and His kingdom are offered to the nation on the only conditions upon which they could be presented—viz., upon the people's repentance and their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. In the other, the King is rejected, the kingdom is taken from the rightful owners, is given to others, and the King goes to the cross. The Jews' rejection of Jesus as Messiah leads to their rejection in turn ; then the fall of Jerusalem, the demolition of the temple, the destruction of their polity, and their dispersion throughout the world are announced ; and the disciples are bidden to carry the glad tidings of salvation to all the nations (chapters xxiii. 34-39 ; xxviii. 18-20).

How amazing is the answer the apostles return to His question, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" "Some say, John the Baptist ; some Elijah ; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." This is the report of the disciples as to Israel's conception of Jesus. Not one word about the Messiah ; not even a hint that He might be the expected Deliverer. They say He is a prophet, perhaps even one risen from the dead, but nothing more. That He is the Messiah appears foreign to their thoughts of Him. And this is the outcome, the fruit of a ministry and testimony such as the world had never before seen, never will know until He

comes again, a ministry when the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, spoke to men, wrought His mighty deeds among them ; when the powers of the world to come were manifested and felt as never before nor since. Heaven, earth, demons, angels, and the Father Himself bore witness to Him, and yet the people could see no more in Him than a prophet like Elijah or Jeremiah, and could infer no more than that He might be the risen Baptist. So true it is that “He came unto his own, and his own received him not ;” so true it is that “the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John i. 10, 11). At His own door He stood and knocked, only to find it shut in His face. Israel rejected their Messiah, and the kingdom promised them was taken away from them.

IV. A more particular analysis is the following : Matthew demonstrates that Jesus did the public work and bore the public character of the Messiah, the promised Prophet and King. This he accomplishes by many infallible proofs : (1) By His genealogy, chapter i. ; (2) by events connected with His birth, whereby ancient prophecies were fulfilled, ii. ; (3) by the ministry of John the Baptist, iii. ; (4) by the trial of the King, iv. ; (5) by the proclamation of the kingdom, v.-vii. ; (6) by the miracles, viii., ix. ; (7) by the mission of the twelve, x. ; (8) by the enunciation

of the principles of the kingdom, and its progress in the world, xi.-xiii. ; (9) by the hostility of the rulers and the unbelief of the people, xiv.-xvii. ; (10) by the Messianic character exhibited and claimed, xviii.-xxi. ; (11) by His rejection, and His predictions of the end, xxii.-xxv. ; (12) by His sacrifice, and the events associated therewith, xxvi., xxvii. ; (13) by His triumphant resurrection, xxviii. 1-17 ; (14) and by His royal commission, xxviii. 18-20.

Another analysis is the following :

A. Messiah's Birth, chapters i., ii.

1. Genealogy, chapter i. 1-17.
2. Birth, i. 18-25.
3. Visit of the Wise men, ii. 1-12.
4. Flight into Egypt, ii. 13-23.

B. Messiah's preparation for His Ministry, iii., iv. 11.

1. Preaching of John, iii. 1-12.
2. Baptism of Jesus, iii. 13-17.
3. Temptation, iv. 1-11.

C. Messiah's Presentation to Israel by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds, iv. 12-xvi. 12.

1. Beginning of His Ministry, iv. 12-25.
2. Sermon on the Mount, v.-vii.
3. Messianic Miracles, viii., ix.
4. Mission of the Twelve, x.
5. Dangers impending, warnings uttered, xi., xii.

6. Prophetic History of the Kingdom of Heaven, during the present dispensation, xiii.

7. Messianic Works and Words, xiv.-xvi. 12.

D. Messiah taking account of results of His Ministry, xvi. 13-20.

E. Preparation of Messiah for the Cross, xvi. 21-xxv.

1. First Prediction of His Death, xvi. 21.

2. Second Prediction, xvii. 9, 12.

3. Third Prediction, xix. 18, 19.

4. Final Testimony to Impenitent Israel, chapters xxi.-xxv.

F. Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of Messiah, chapters xxvi., xxvii.

G. Messiah's Resurrection, xxviii.

V. The central idea of the First Gospel. From the preceding remarks it is clear that Matthew's is the Gospel of the Messiah. The main object of the Spirit in this Scripture is to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the predicted Deliverer, of whom Moses and the prophets did write. Accordingly, the events in the life of Jesus, His words and His works, are grouped together so as to prove and illustrate this great theme. This, it is believed, is the prominent feature of the Gospel. Messiah, according to the prophets, is a divine person; He is also human, the son of a virgin; moreover, He bears the holy name, Im-

manuel, God with us. But in a special sense He is the King of Israel, the Redeemer of the chosen people (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6; liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5).

Furthermore, He is the Son and Lord of David and the occupant of his throne (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Acts ii. 30-32). All these features in the person and work of the Messiah Matthew keeps in view. But his preëminent theme is, Jesus the promised King and Deliverer, the one in whom the Messianic predictions find their ample and complete fulfillment. This appears from the first sentence of his book (chapter i. 1). It is the key-verse of Matthew. Every book of the Bible has its key, and the key is not always hung up at the door. Here, however, it is: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The chronological order is reversed. David was later than Abraham by centuries, yet he is named first. Why? Because it was with him the royal Messianic covenant was made (1 Chron. xvii.; Psalm lxxxix.). Jesus is that glorious Son of whom it was promised in the covenant, "His throne shall be established forever." Hence Matthew names David first as progenitor of Messiah. But Messiah is also the son of Abraham. God made two covenants with the chosen people: one with Abraham, in which it was stipulated that all nations should be blessed in his seed; the other

with David, in which the prominent feature is the everlasting throne and kingdom of God. The first is the gracious covenant; the second, the royal. The first contemplates redemption; the second, the establishment of that kingdom which in due time will subdue all things to God. Matthew takes up both and shows how they have their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus. But it is with the Davidic he is more especially concerned; and so he orders the names in the first verse of his book as he does: "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Christ is the one and only one promised in the two covenants.

We are now to see how Matthew works out the great theme, that Jesus is the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament, and waited for by the people of God.

I. The order of narration in Matthew is worthy of notice. Chronological sequence is not strictly adhered to. There is, of course, a general observance of the succession of events in the ministry of the Lord, but Matthew's plan is thoroughly systematic, and his plan molds the structure of the book. He arranges his material in a logical rather than in a strictly historical manner. He groups events and discourses and many of the miracles together, though they may be somewhat sundered from each other as to the time when

they actually occurred. The indefinite particle of time "then," found in the First Gospel some ninety times, marks the transitions in the narrative. The phrase, "When Jesus had ended these sayings," indicates the topical arrangement (vii. 28 ; xi. 1 ; xiii. 53 ; xix. 1 ; xxvi. 1).

II. In the development of his theme Matthew is careful to keep within the limits of Jewish hopes. He never loses sight of the essential point, the presentation of Jesus to the chosen people as the Messiah. By this is not meant that this Gospel was written for the Jews, either Christian or unbelieving. "As soon might we say that because it is the kingly Gospel it was written for kings." In proving the fulfillment of the Messianic promises and hopes in the person and work of Jesus, he likewise proves that salvation by Him is brought and offered to them. Accordingly, the First Gospel moves almost exclusively within Jewish circles. Here Jesus says He is sent only to Israel's lost sheep (xv. 24). He commands His apostles to preach only to Jews ; gentiles and Samaritans are passed by (x. 5). Jews are the children of the kingdom (viii. 12). According to the unvarying apostolic custom, Matthew presents the Saviour first and foremost to the covenant people. After His rejection, death, and resurrection, the message of salvation is sent to the whole world (xxviii. 18-20).

III. Messiah's Genealogy (chapter i.). In Matthew, it is strictly Jewish, being carried down from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary ; while Luke traces our Lord's human descent from Joseph through Heli up to Adam, the father of our race. The First Gospel is occupied with the Saviour's Jewish relations, the third with those He sustains to the whole race. Some things in these two genealogical tables are worthy of note. Matthew's obviously is that of Joseph, and is in the royal line through "David the king," Solomon, Rehoboam, etc. From Abraham to David the two correspond, but from David to Joseph they widely differ. Luke probably gives us Mary's (proof is deferred until his Gospel is under review). Messiah was to be the seed of woman, the son of a virgin (Gen. iii. 15 ; Isa. vii. 14). The prophecy had its literal fulfillment in the birth of Jesus (Matt. i. 18-23 ; Gal. iv. 4). Messiah was Joseph's son only in the legal sense, as entitled to sit on David's throne. Had Joseph been His father according to the flesh, He could not have occupied that throne. God's word barred His way to it. In Jer. xxii. 30, we read, "Thus saith the **LORD**, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days : for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." This sentence is pronounced against

Jehoiakin or Jeehoniah, the last king but one of Judah in the line of David, and he never had a son to rule ; Zedekiah, his successor, was his uncle (2 Kings xxiv. 17 ; Jer. xxxvii. 1). Now, Joseph, the husband of Mary, was the lineal descendant of this man Jeehoniah (Matt. i. 11, 12).

Luke traces the line through Nathan to David (Luke iii. 31). Nathan was David's son (2 Sam. v. 14). But neither Nathan nor his heirs had any promise to occupy David's throne. The royal line was in Solomon and his descendants. If, therefore, Jesus is the son of Nathan according to the flesh, how is He to reach the throne ? The difficulties are twofold and serious : if He is Joseph's son according to the flesh, then God's word in Jer. xxii. 30 stands between Him and the throne ; if He is Nathan's son, He has no legal right to it. The solution is by marriage. By divine direction, Joseph becomes Mary's husband, and thus Messiah's way to David's throne is cleared of every obstacle. Two genealogies are indispensable to meet all the requirements of God's word touching the incarnation ; the one to accomplish the prophecy that Messiah is both David's son and heir, the other to fulfill the prediction that He is the son of a Hebrew virgin.¹

¹ See Wilkinson's "Israel My Glory," from which much of the above remarks on Messiah's Genealogies in Matt. and Luke is taken.

Between Joram and Uzziah (verse 8) the list omits three names: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Two reasons may be given for the omission: first, to bring the number of names within the limit of fourteen; second, to throw out the more immediate descendants of the wicked Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. God's Spirit exhibits His resentment at the grafting of that idolatrous stock upon the house of David by refusing to admit the names of Athaliah's heirs for three generations.

Another omission occurs at verse 11, viz., Jehoiakim, father of Jehoiakin, or Jechoniah (verse 12). There is some slight evidence that this omission occurred through the oversight of some scribe of a very ancient text of Matthew.¹

Four women are found in Matthew's list, with three of whom—viz., Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba—heinous sin is found. The fourth, though

¹ The similarity between the names of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin in some Greek forms is very great, and the latter might readily be mistaken for the former, and thus one of them might be omitted. Besides, the expression "Jechonias and his brethren" is difficult, for while Jehoiakim had brothers (2 Chron. iii. 15), we nowhere read Jehoiakin had. Moreover, Jehoiakim reigned eleven years (2 Kings xxiii. 36), while Jehoiakin reigned but three months (2 Kings xxiv. 8). If both names were in the original Matthew, then we have the exact number of fourteen generations in each division. As the text stands, Jechoniah begins and ends two divisions.

pure and true, belonged to an abhorred race, the Moabites. Messiah's ancestors were fallen and guilty, like the rest of mankind. But although He was descended from an impure race, He brought no taint of sin into the world with Him ; though He associated with sinful men and grappled with fierce temptations, He was without sin ; therefore can He, the strong and the mighty, deliver the oppressed.

IV. The quotations made from the Old Testament in Matthew. They far exceed in number those found in any one of the other gospels ; they almost equal those of all the others combined. Note some features of these citations. First, their range. They touch almost every event in the Lord's earthly life, from His birth to His death. Especially where His Messiahship is involved they are introduced. Matthew finds Messiah in many places in the Old Testament where we, looking no deeper than the surface, would fail to discover Him. To Matthew the older Scriptures are replete with adumbrations and predictions of the promised one. He sees, or seems to see, in the chosen people a Messianic nation whose history and whose experience to some degree foreshadow Him in whom every prophecy and promise shall find its ample fulfillment (cp. i. 22, 23 ; ii. 14, 15, 23, etc.).

Secondly, note their minuteness. The Old

Testament is applied to a great variety of incidents and crises in the Saviour's life—*e. g.*, His birth (i. 23, cp. Isa. vii. 14); birthplace (ii. 6, cp. Micah v. 2); flight into Egypt (ii. 13, cp. Hos. xi. 1); Rachel weeping over her slaughtered children (ii. 17, 18, cp. Jer. xxxi. 15, etc.). His miracles of healing are declared to be a fulfillment of prophecy (viii. 17, cp. Isa. liii. 4). His teaching by parables is justified by Scripture (xiii. 13–15, cp. Isa. vi. 9, 10). His public ministry is sanctioned by the Word of God (xii. 17–21, cp. Isa. xlvi. 1–7). His triumphant entry into Jerusalem was the accomplishment of prophetic Scripture (xxi. 4, 5, cp. Zech. ix. 9). Mark and Luke also record this incident, but do not quote Scripture; John does (cp. John xii. 15). His abandonment by His disciples is likewise a fulfillment of Scripture (xxvi. 31, cp. Zech. xiii. 7). His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver is also a fulfillment (xxvii. 9, cp. Zech. xi. 12, 13).

These quotations establish the fact that Messiah is the central figure of the Old Testament and the supreme object of that revelation. It is obvious that Matthew's chief aim is to show that the events in the life and ministry of the Lord which he records occurred in accordance with what the prophets had foretold respecting the Messiah. The formula with which he commonly introduces his citation is “That it might be ful-

filled which was spoken through the prophet." Matthew's has been well named "The Gospel of the fulfillment."

They show likewise how that from of old Messiah's rejection by Israel was foreseen and faithfully announced. They prove that from birth to death the glorious King for whom the people pretended to wait was to be disowned, refused, misrepresented, calumniated, and finally put to death by that nation to which He was more particularly and peculiarly sent. The quotations in Matthew strikingly exhibit the depravity and malignity of men. The flight to Egypt; Rachel rising from her tomb to weep over her slaughtered children; "He shall be called a Nazarene;" parables spoken that blind eyes might become more blind, hard hearts harder; the rejected stone become the head of the corner; all show how deep-seated is human depravity and how malignant.

V. "The kingdom of heaven." The announcement of its near approach was made both by John the Baptist (iii. 2) and by the Lord Jesus (iv. 17). The expression "the kingdom of heaven" is found only in the First Gospel, and here thirty-one times. Of the fifteen parables recorded in Matthew all but three begin "The kingdom of heaven is like"— The corresponding title "kingdom of God" occurs five

times, and frequently in the other gospels and in the epistles. Matthew's characteristic phrase is "the kingdom of heaven." There is no doubt a slight distinction between it and the other phrase, "kingdom of God," but it is aside from the present purpose to discuss the difference. Both are here treated as identical in significance. What is meant by it?

"The kingdom of heaven" appears to have been well understood by the Jews. Neither John nor Jesus defines it. It needed no definition. Their hearers were familiar with the idea. At Sinai God was pleased to say to Israel: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. xix. 6). Israel's first national constitution was a theocracy. God was their King; they formed His kingdom. In the royal covenant made with David (2 Sam. vii.; Psa. lxxxix.) an imperishable throne is secured to David's son. In Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, 18, a world-wide kingdom is to be set up in connection with Messiah's advent. In all these places the kingdom of God is associated with Israel. The chosen people form its center. Gentiles are to be under its sway, enjoy its blessings, and reap its glorious benefits; but Israel's place in the kingdom is preëminent.

“The kingdom of heaven,” therefore, is a veritable realm. Christ is its supreme Sovereign.

He defines its nature and its limits. He prescribes its condition of entrance, its laws, its privileges, and rewards. He predicts its history, and its ultimate victory over all antagonism (chapters v.-vii. ; xiii.) It is a perfectly righteous rule ; it will embrace at length all the nations, and the earth itself will share in its blessedness. Under its rule all injustice, oppression, and strife will cease, the evils of poverty be known no more, and all men dwell together in peace. "The kingdom of heaven," in its final triumph, will be heaven ruling, and earth doing the will of God as it is done in heaven (Matt. vi. 10.)

The Church and the kingdom though intimately associated are not identical. The Church is in the kingdom, but it does not bound its limits. The kingdom is broader, more comprehensive than the Church. Christ is now "head over all things to his body, the church" (Eph. i. 22, 23). His mediatorial authority commands throughout the universe, controls nature, good and bad men alike, evil spirits, and subjects them to His purposes of redemption. Even now His kingdom is wider than the Church.

The kingdom is not now fully manifested, nor victorious. It has its mysteries (Matt. xiii. 11 ; Mark iv. 11) ; *i. e.*, it has its secrets which are not revealed to all, which are understood only by its true subjects. The seven parables of chapter

xiii. deal with these mysteries. They disclose its progress in the world, and its growth ; they show how good and evil co-mingle in it, and how the final separation will be effected. They show, too, how it will come at length to universality and victory, and fill the whole earth with blessedness and peace.

This kingdom Christ proclaimed as "at hand," for the King Himself was here, and stood before the men who asked when it should appear, declaring that it was then among them (Luke xvii. 21).

The kingdom was first presented to the rightful heirs, the people of Israel. But they refused the offer, rejected the King, and finally crucified Him. In Matt. viii. 12 ; xxi. 43, Jesus announced that it should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. The announcement deeply offended the rulers, and they sought to lay hands on Him. It is now found only among believers who are taken from among the peoples of earth, and who enjoy its privileges and blessings. Israel in the meantime suffers the age-long dispersion outside the kingdom and denied its blessings, though still kept separate from the nations of the world. The day will come, however, when they will again rejoice in Jehovah's favor, when they shall cry with glad acclaim, "Blessed is he that

cometh in the name of the Lord." Then the chosen people will once more take their place as the people of God, the center of blessing for the whole world, and the kingdom be indeed "come."

VI. The miracles in Matthew exhibit the Messianic character of the Gospel. The whole number of miracles recorded by the evangelists is variously stated; by some there are thirty-five, by others, thirty-three. Of these one is common to the four gospels—viz., the feeding of the five thousand. Several are given by two or three of the writers, and several (seventeen) by one alone. Matthew has three that are peculiar to him—viz., opening the eyes of two blind men (ix. 27–31); Peter's walking on the water (xiv. 24–29); and the coin taken from the mouth of the fish (xvii. 24–27). That these recorded miracles constitute but a small portion of all that were wrought by the Lord the gospels abundantly attest (*e. g.* Matt. iv. 23, 24; xii. 15, 16; xv. 30; John xx. 30, 31, etc.).

It is certain that out of all Christ's supernatural works Matthew has made a careful selection, and has recorded chiefly those that illustrate and enforce his main subject. In chapters viii., ix., he masses together no less than ten miracles, about one half of the whole number found in his Gospel. These ten miracles are remarkable for

their arrangement and their variety. They cover nearly the whole field of our Lord's supernatural works. They embrace every form of cure, as leprosy, palsy, fever, blindness, dumbness, demoniacal possession, control of the forces of nature, and resurrection from the dead. Then, too, the various methods Christ employed to effect miraculous results are found—*e. g.*, His touch, His word of command, near at hand, or at a distance. Moreover, the order observed in the narrative is noteworthy. It differs materially from that of Mark and Luke. Both the latter begin with the casting out of the demon in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark i. 23; Luke iv. 33); Matthew begins with the healing of a leper (viii. 2). Mark inserts two other cures before recording this of the leper (i. 23, 30). It is demonstrable that the cure of the leper was not the first miracle wrought by the Lord Jesus. The order according to Mark is, the demoniac, Peter's wife's mother, the leper: according to Luke, it is the demoniac, the mother of Peter's wife, the draught of fishes, the leper. Matthew forsakes the exact order to follow a logical one. He has a definite plan, and supreme end in view. His plan controls his selection and his arrangement. He sets aside temporal sequence in order the more cogently and convincingly to press his central theme. Jesus is the Messiah, the king of Israel,

in whom the promises to David and to Abraham find their accomplishment. Therefore, he marshals his supernatural proofs in solid array. Only Jehovah can cure the leprosy ; only He can touch the foul malady and contract no taint. This Jesus does by His own almighty word, and not by any delegated power ; therefore He is the Lord. But if Israel will not receive this impressive testimony, let another witness be introduced. A gentile and soldier intercedes in behalf of his sick servant. He is a Roman officer whose faith in Jesus is so perfect and whose confidence in His power is so complete that a word alone needs to be spoken and the disease will instantly quit its hold on the sufferer. For as his servants come and go at his bidding with military promptness and obedience, so sickness with equal promptness obeys the Lord. A more concrete and convincing proof of Jesus' Messiahship could not well be furnished. Even Jesus "marveled." Only twice in the gospels do we read of His astonishment ; here at "so great faith ;" at Nazareth "because of their unbelief" (Mark vi. 6).

In the course of this marvelous record Matthew quotes from Isaiah liii. 4—the great Messianic chapter—the striking words, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (viii. 17). There is no hint in the gospels that Christ was ever sick, Himself. Weary, hungry,

thirsty, He often was, as we know ; but not sick. We never read that any one ever died when He was present. The only funeral He is ever recorded to have encountered He changed into a scene of life and joy (Luke vii. 11-17). Into human anguish and suffering He entered with a sympathy all His own. From human woe He did not stand apart ; from sin He did—He kept the distance of holiness itself from every touch and stain of it. With His word of authority He bade disease and infirmities depart. He grappled with them, “took” them, “bare” them Himself. And He can still be “touched with a feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. iv. 15, 16).

The last miracle recorded by Matthew before the crucifixion is the withering of the barren fig tree (xxi. 19). The first, as we have seen, was the healing of the leper. Both were signs to the people of Israel. He would heal them if they would but turn to Him with all their heart. He would cleanse them of their deadly sickness, their foul pollution, of which leprosy is a most impressive type. But they refused His gracious offers, and instead passed the sentence of death upon Him. Their dreadful doom was pronounced symbolically when He so solemnly addressed the fig tree. Not many hours thereafter He said : “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me hence-

forth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (xxiii. 38, 39).

VII. The parables exhibit the Messianic character of the Lord Jesus. There are in all fifteen parables found in the First Gospel, of which ten are peculiar to it, *i. e.*, recorded here alone. Each of these ten displays with greater or less clearness the authority and glory of the Prince-Messiah. Four of them are inserted in chapter xiii.—viz., "The wheat and tares," "the hid treasure," "the pearl," "the drawnet." The others are, "the unmerciful servant" (xviii. 23–34); "laborers in the vineyard" (xx. 1–16); "the two sons" (xxi. 28–31); "marriage of the king's son" (xxii. 1–14); "the ten virgins" (xxv. 1–13); "the talents" (xxv. 14–30).¹

No one can study these parables without perceiving with what singular felicity and beauty they contribute to the main design of the Spirit in this Gospel. Kingly authority is manifest in almost all of them. It is a sovereign who sends forth "his angels" to gather the tares into bundles for burning; it is the angels likewise who separate the bad from the good, the righteous from the wicked, in the drawnet. It is the king who judges the unmerciful servant. It is the master of the house who hires laborers for his vineyard.

¹ The parables on "the mysteries of the kingdom" are considered in the following section.

It is the king who visits the banquet to see the guests. It is the royal bridegroom whom the virgins go forth to meet. It is the lord of the servants who reckons with them in the talents. In the husbandmen (xxi. 33-44) Matthew designates the owner as "householder," or master of the house, while Mark calls him a "man," and Luke "a certain man." The arrangement of the parables in Matthew suggests the same great idea. They begin with the sower scattering the seed of the kingdom, and close with the talents, the adjudication of the last day.

VIII. The discourses accord with the general plan of the inspired writer of the First Gospel. Of these there are five which in a peculiar way are fitted into the narrative. They are, the sermon on the mount ; instructions given to the twelve ; the seven parables of the mysteries of the kingdom ; instruction with reference to the treatment of those who err ; and the Olivet prophecy.

There are other and vitally important discourses found in Matthew besides those above mentioned, such as—*e. g.*, that on John the Baptist (chapter xi.) ; Christ's defense of Himself against the accusations of the Pharisees (xii.) ; on defilement (xv.) ; on false teaching, and the test of true discipleship (xvi.) ; the greatest in the kingdom (xx.) ; the rejection of Israel (xxi.) ; the resurrection (xxii.) ; woes pronounced against the

Pharisees (xxiii.). If to these we add the parables, instructions, and predictions contained in Matthew, it will be recognized how large a place Christ's addresses fill in this Gospel. The five referred to are selected for more particular notice because each of them closes with the statement, "and when Jesus had ended these saying"—a statement that indicates both a conclusion and a transition.

1. The sermon on the mount (chapters v.-vii.). It is the King's proclamation, His royal manifesto. In it He publishes the principles and laws of His kingdom, and describes the character of its subjects. In it, as elsewhere, He speaks with authority. Six times He employs the formula of the supreme lawgiver, "But I say unto you" (v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). Throughout this great sermon He speaks, acts, bears Himself like a king.

A. The beatitudes (v. 1-16). The beatitudes are not independent propositions, nor axioms. They are knit together by the closest logical ties. One grows out of another by inward necessity and irresistible sequence. There are nine in all (though some hold there are but seven, the last two being considered as not strictly beatitudes).

They fall into three classes or groups—four in

the first group (verses 3–6); three in the second (verses 7–9); two in the third (verses 10–12). The foundation of all is the first beatitude (verse 3), “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs in the kingdom of heaven.” It is the door into the kingdom. It means neither penury, nor self-imposed poverty, nor pusillanimity. It means spiritual bankruptcy. One enters the kingdom as an insolvent, as one who has come to the end of self, as one who comes to the Lord Jesus as a total bankrupt.

The realization of the destitute state leads to mourning (verse 4)—sorrow, broken-heartedness, repentance; and repentance produces meekness, the docile, teachable spirit (verse 5). These three prime beatitudes are succeeded by an intense desire after righteousness, *i. e.*, complete conformity to the laws and principles of the kingdom, which is the fourth in this first series (verse 6). The first three are marked by the degrees of a descending scale, low, lower, lowest.

The next three (verses 7–9) are in the ascending scale. The subjects of the kingdom become transformed into its spirit, they exhibit the mind of Christ.

One characteristic feature of the King is mercy, and His subjects are merciful (verse 7).

The King is holy, pure; the subjects become pure in heart (verse 8). The King is peaceful, the

Prince of Peace ; the subjects are peacemakers (verse 9).

The last two verses (10, 11), reveal the treatment of the subjects of the kingdom by the world ; they are hated, persecuted. Let anyone possess and display to unbelieving men the true spirit and principles of the kingdom, and the world will speedily show its dislike and enmity.

The subjects have solemn duties and responsibilities toward society, the world. They are "salt" (verse 13), to preserve ; "light" (verse 14) to illumine.

B. Principles of the kingdom contrasted with the laws of Moses (v. 17-48). The righteousness of the subjects of the kingdom must vastly exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. The principles are applied to murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, vindictiveness. The righteousness which Christ requires in the subjects of His kingdom is not something external, not an outward conformity to the bare letter of the law, but it is internal, it touches the seat of the affections, the will, and the motives of the soul. It finds its realization in love, the love which is but a dim reflection of the love of God.

C. Duties of the subjects of the kingdom (vi. 1-18). These are distributed into three groups : almsgiving, prayer, fasting. The teaching relates to false and true prayer, then a model

prayer is given. There are seven petitions in it—the first three relate to God, and are coördinate; the last four to man, joined by particles of sequence. The genuineness of the conclusion, “For thine is the kingdom,” etc., is seriously questioned, but it is noteworthy that it is found only in Matthew, and is kingly.

D. Duty of the subjects of the kingdom with respect to secular affairs (vi. 19–34). Two things made prominent—viz., treasures and anxieties.

E. The subjects of the kingdom are not to be censorious, but yet to discriminate; to do so, they are to seek heavenly guidance (vii. 1–12).

F. Exhortation to enter the kingdom (vii. 13–23). Before men are set the “two ways” of life and of death; Christ guides to the way of life; “false prophets” guide to the way of death.

G. Illustrations in conclusion (vii. 24–27): the house on the rock; the house on the sand.

Summary of the Sermon.

- I. Conversion is the door of entrance into the kingdom.
- II. Relations of converted men to God.
- III. Relations of converted men to their fellow-men.
- IV. Converted men to live the separated life.

2. The Twelve: Their Choice and Their Charge (chapter x.).

A. The agents chosen, and their names (x. 1-4).

B. The agents commissioned (x. 5-15).

(a) The sphere of their mission (verses 5, 6). It is strictly confined to Jews; gentiles and even Samaritans are excluded.

(b) Burden of their message (verse 7) the kingdom proclaimed.

(c) Supernatural authentication of their mission (verse 8).

(d) Their maintenance (verses 9, 10).

(e) Responsibility of hearers (verses 11-15).

C. Dangers of their mission, instructions touching them (verses 16-23).

The agents will be (a) exposed to peril, (b) arrested, (c) scourged, (d) betrayed, (e) hated, (f) persecuted, (g) done to death. Their behavior was to be (a) prudent; (b) harmless; (c) trustful; (d) flight, when possible.

D. Fellowship with Christ in suffering a badge of discipleship, and a pledge of salvation (verses 24-39).

(a) Their master was persecuted, they are to expect no less.

(b) They are to be full of courage.

(c) To declare his whole counsel.

(d) To fear God alone.

- (c) Shall be kept safe and sound for glory.
- (f) Boldly to confess Him.
- (g) To love and honor Him above all else beside.

E. The majestic encouragement (verses 40-42). They represent Him. They carry His message. Their cause is His. He reckons treatment of them as treatment of Himself; for He and they are identified. The pain in the extremity of the body flies to the head, is felt by the head. Christ and His agents are one.

While these weighty instructions were primarily addressed to the twelve apostles in the first instance, and contemplated a special mission to the people of Israel, nevertheless the great principles herein embodied, the duties, the fortitude, the prudence and steadfastness inculcated, are for all missionaries and for all time. The world's hostility to Christ and His servants, the rejection of the testimony of God by the majority of men, and hatred for the chosen witnesses of the truth, continue unabated down to the epoch when the Son of man shall come in His glory.

3. The seven great parables of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (chapter xiii.).

Brief notices of them only can be here taken.

- (a) The number seven is significant. It is the number of perfection, of completeness. These parables present us with the mysteries of the

kingdom from various sides, so that we thereby gain a comprehensive understanding of its nature, progress, and issue. (b) Six open with the same words, "The kingdom of heaven is like—." The first omits the words, for it is introductory. It sets forth Christ Himself as the sower. After His initiatory work (which does not end with His public ministry) human responsibility in connection with the kingdom has its place and share, and therefore the words referred to are introduced. (c) Here is another instance of Matthew's topical method. As in the ten miracles of chapters viii., ix., he here likewise masses together seven great parables that he may all the more convincingly press his central theme. Jesus is the Prophet of God, the King of the kingdom, the Sovereign of the gospel dispensation. He introduces it, guides it, and discloses its marvelous history. (d) The first four of these parables were addressed to the multitudes; the remaining three to His disciples alone. The interpretation of the sower and of the tares was given to them also (verse 36; Mark iv. 10). Christ veils His truth under parabolic forms that the unbelieving people who had predetermined neither to see nor hear Messiah's testimony might remain in judicial blindness, as Isaiah had predicted (verses 13-15). He so far respects man's free will that He will not force him to be-

lieve. Thus these parables become like the wilderness cloud. They have two sides or faces, one bright and gracious toward believers, the other dark and threatening toward the rejecters of the truth. (e) They are prophetic. They cover the whole period that lies between the first and second advents of the Saviour. They paint in sharpest outline the main features of our dispensation from its beginning to its consummation. They reveal that the gospel contemplates the whole race, that the kingdom is no longer restricted to one nation, as was Judaism ; that it is universal in its character and claims, and is offered to all without distinction. (f) They do not affirm that the race as such shall enter the kingdom. Three of them positively deny that even a majority of the race will become identified with the kingdom. The sower does not warrant the expectation of a universal harvest from the seed sown. It is but a small proportion that brings forth fruit ; and even then the yield is varied—"some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold." Both the wheat and the tares, "the children of the kingdom, and the children of the evil one," grow together till the harvest ; and the harvest is the consummation of the age. The net passes through the waters and incloses of every kind ; but when drawn to the shore—the consummation of the age—angels

sever the wicked from the righteous. (g) The kingdom shall become great and influential, as a mustard seed expands into a tree. It will permeate society like leaven. It shall be "found" by the individual, who joyfully parts with all that he may possess it. It shall be sought eagerly and persistently, as one who seeks a priceless pearl. That is, the kingdom is viewed both as national and individual, as external and internal, as visible and invisible, as earthly and heavenly. It is "like" many things. It is not defined, it is only described. Accordingly, in these seven parables our Lord deals with its "mysteries," with these alone. Much He reveals of its nature, history, and issue; more He conceals. But in so doing He is seen to be perfectly familiar with all its phases and forms and spheres. He is a prophet and more than a prophet; He is the King of the kingdom; its Founder and its Lord.

4. Dignity and duties of the subjects of the kingdom (chapter xviii.).

(1) The kingdom belongs only to the childlike (verses 1-14).

(a) The greatest in it are the childlike, vs. 1-4.

(b) Their place in it is exalted and blessed, verses 5, 6.

(c) Offenses against them are dangerous, verses 7-11.

(d) Divine and loving care of them is assured, 12-14.

(2) Faithful and tender discipline is to be exercised (15-20).

(3) Limits of forgiveness are illustrated (21-35).

5. The Olivet prophecy (chapters xxiv., xxv.).

Mark and Luke record this great prediction also, but the account in Matthew is much fuller. We learn from Mark xiii. 3, that it was addressed primarily to four of the apostles, Peter, James, John, and Andrew. It is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, to separate its various parts from each other, so closely are they bound together. The following is rather a designation of some of its features than an analysis of its structure.

(1) The occasion of the prophecy (xxiv. 1, 2).

Some of His disciples called His attention to the beauty of the temple, its massive stones, and the offerings brought to its altar. The solemn announcement of its total demolition was the only reply He vouchsafed.

(2) Request for further information (verse 3). The question the disciples asked Him on Olivet was twofold: (a) When shall the temple be overthrown? (b) "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age?" To both

these anxious inquiries our Lord makes answer in the majestic discourse of these chapters.

(3) Prediction of the fall of Jerusalem and the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ (xxiv. 4-31).

(a) The beginning of sorrows, verses 4-8. All this, trying as it might be, would not be "the end."

(b) Harsher sufferings would succeed the sorrows, verses 9-14. The Lord's servants would be hated and killed; false prophets would arise and lead many astray; iniquity abound, love relax; the gospel be proclaimed to the inhabited world as a witness; then "the end."

(c) Portents, persecutions, false Messiahs, and unparalleled tribulation await the disciples and the world, verses 15-28. The abomination of desolation set up; trouble unprecedented; the shortened days; the lightning-like coming of the Son of man. These are events of the end-time.

(d) The great advent, verses 29-31. Cosmical convulsions; mourning of earth's tribes; gathering of the elect.

(4) Practical application of the prophecy to the people of God (verses 32-51).

(a) The parable of the fig tree, verses 32-35.

(b) Time of the advent unknown and unexpected, verses 36-42. Watch!

(c) The advent thief-like, verses 43, 44. Ready!

- (d) The stewards of God, verses 45–51. Judgment!
- (5) Parable of the ten virgins (xxv. 1–13).
- (6) Parable of the talents (verses 14–30).
- (7) Judgment of all the nations (verses 31–46).

Two supreme objects occupy the field of this marvelous prophecy, one of which lies near to the divine speaker, the other remote from Him in point of time. But both are perfectly clear to His omniscient vision. The near is the fall of Jerusalem, the remote is His second advent. The first took place within forty years after the prediction—viz., A. D. 70; the second is still future. The one was restricted to a very limited area, though it affected the whole world in its issues; the other embraces the planet.

Some of the predictions apply to both these events, but in different degrees. The fall of Jerusalem is insignificant in comparison with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet there is a striking resemblance between the two events; the destruction of the holy city prefigures the more tremendous scenes which are to accompany the advent of the Lord. The one answers to the other as type and antitype.

To illustrate: In chapter xxiv. 14 our Lord says, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations ; and then shall the end come." That this prediction was fulfilled before Jerusalem's destruction Paul attests (Col. i. 6, 23). The like world-wide proclamation is immediately to precede the final end (Rev. xiv. 6, 7). So likewise the unequaled tribulation spoken of in xxiv. 21 appears to belong to both the events referred to. That scenes of suffering, horror, and crime almost indescribable, took place at the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Roman army is well known. But that another "time of trouble," an unparalleled tribulation immediately precedes the advent is certain (ep. Matt. xxiv. 21, 29 ; Dan. xii. 1, 2 ; Jer. xxx. 7). Israel and the gentiles alike will be in that "tribulation."

In these five discourses our Lord takes the character of lawgiver, king, and judge. So it had been foretold of the Messiah : " For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king ; he will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22). The twofold office of prophet and king are very prominent in Matthew. In the discourses no less than in the deeds, Matthew presents Jesus of Nazareth to us as the promised Messiah, the King, and the Prophet appointed and anointed of God. At the close of chapter xxv. we find these words, " And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings." His public teaching was now "finished," and He ad-

✓ dresses himself to the solemn event next awaiting, the cross. According to John, much precious teaching was given by Him after this; but it was confined to the little circle of the apostles, and was, we may venture to say, private. His office of prophet to the chosen people was over, and no further word does He speak to them. His discourses began with the sermon on the mount; they end with the prophecy on the mount. Between these two mounts what matchless teaching is found! Verily, "Never man spake like this man."

IX. Other peculiarities found in Matthew indicate the same general purpose of the Gospel.

1. Matthew gives some prominence to the gentiles, intimating that they are to share in the blessedness of Messiah's presence and reign. Of the four women he mentions in the genealogy two at least are gentiles, Rahab of Jericho, of a proscribed race; and Ruth, a Moabitess, of an equally abhorred people. An Egyptian or an Edomite might enter the congregation of Israel at the third generation, but a Moabite not till the tenth generation (Deut. xxiii. 3-8). In chapter i. the wise men ask, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" In chapter viii. the Lord announces the reception of multitudes into the kingdom of heaven while the "sons" of the kingdom shall be cast out. Isaiah is

quoted as predicting that Messiah shall “declare judgment to the gentiles,” and that “in his name shall the gentiles trust” (xii. 18, 21).

2. The Church appears in the First Gospel. It is not mentioned in the others. In chapter xvi. 18, 19, it is named, its foundation is declared (certainly not Peter, but the “rock,” Christ Himself) and its victory over the power of evil assured. In chapter xviii. the conduct of believers toward erring members of the Church is prescribed. In both instances it is closely associated with the kingdom of heaven, and yet is distinguished from it. In chapter xiii. its prophetic history is traced under the title of the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” Over the kingdom and the Church alike he is Sovereign, controlling and guiding all, and judging all.

3. Matthew beyond any of the other evangelists tells us of Jewish enmity pursuing the Lord up to the very cross, and beyond it. He alone tells of the exact price paid to the traitor, and the purchase of the potter’s field with money which the guilty suicide flung from him in his awful despair (xxvii. 5-10). He alone records the impious prayer of the Saviour’s murderers, “His blood be on us, and our children” (xxvii. 25). It is Matthew, and Matthew only, who tells us of the sealing of the stone, and of the setting of

the watch, at the door of the sepulcher. This was done at the request and suggestion of the elders and priests of Israel. In their blind rage, their uncontrollable fury, they name their Messiah "That deceiver!" If they can, they will prevent His resurrection, they will shut Him in his tomb forever! At the opening of his Gospel Matthew relates the attempt of Herod against the young child life. At the close, the same enmity stands guard at the grave of the martyred Messiah with sword and spear. Nay, their malignity tries to circumvent the resurrection itself, for they bribe the Roman soldiers with large money to lie about the disappearance of His body.

4. Yet in the death they so shamelessly secured He was conqueror. The quaking earth, the descent of the mighty angel before whose resplendent presence the watchers became as dead men (xxviii. 2-4), and the resurrection of many of the saints (xxvii. 51, 52), tell of one who is both Lord and Christ. But this very fact renders the guilt of the blinded nation all the more heinous and dreadful.

5. The terms "righteous" and "righteousness," which frequently occur in Matthew, betoken the nature of Messiah's kingdom and His character as King (iii. 15; v. 6, 10, 20, etc.). Note how significant is the presence of these two words in

Matthew and their absence in Luke (Matt. v. 10, ep. Luke vi. 22 ; Matt. vi. 33, ep. Luke xii. 31, etc.). In Matthew we read of the “blood of righteous Abel” (xxiii. 35) ; in Luke, “the blood of Abel” (xi. 51). In Matthew the King pronounces judgment on the guilty city (xxiii. 32-39). In Luke He weeps over the doomed place (xix. 41). In the First Gospel there is no mention of tears. The one is the gospel of the Prince and Judge, the other that of the Son of man, the Friend of sinners.

6. Finally, the words employed by the evangelists to signify the death of the Lord Jesus Christ mark the distinctive features of each, and harmonize with singular exactness with the Spirit’s aim in these gospels. Matthew’s very expressive term (literally) is, “He dismissed His spirit” (xxvii. 50). By a conscious and voluntary act, He sent His spirit away. It is regal, sovereign action that is indicated by Matthew’s pregnant word. Mark and Luke use the same term to express His death—viz., “He expired ;” “He breathed out his life” (Mark xv. 37 ; Luke xxiii. 46). It is very remarkable, and no small proof of the inspiration of the very words selected to denote Christ’s act of dying, that the term found in Mark and Luke is quite different from that employed to describe the death of mere men. For example, in Acts v. 5, 10 Ananias and Sap-

phira “gave up the ghost” (R. V.); in like manner, Herod “gave up the ghost” (Acts xii. 23). In these instances an altogether different term is employed; they *died*. The word of Mark and Luke is used only of the Lord Jesus. John’s term differs from those of the other three; “He delivered up his spirit” (xix. 30). The act was free, spontaneous—He delivered over His own spirit. “No man taketh it [my life] from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John x. 18). This same great truth seems to be taught by the apostle, “He gave (up) himself” (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25; 1 Pet. ii. 23). In John it is the supreme act of the Son of God that is made prominent. In Matthew He is the King, the Almighty Sovereign; therefore with royal authority He dismisses His spirit. In Mark and Luke, He is the servant of Jehovah and the Son of man, the Kinsman-Redeemer; therefore He expires, He breathes out His life, for His work is done. In John He is the Son of God; therefore He Himself surrenders His spirit.

Summary of Contents of Matthew.

- I. The King’s birth, chapters i., ii.
- II. The kingdom proclaimed, iii.—vii.
- III. The King’s ways and works, viii.—xii.
- IV. The mysteries of the kingdom, xiii.—xx.

- V. The King rejected, xxi.-xxiii.
- VI. The coming and judgment of the King, xxiv., xxv.
- VII. Salvation through the death and resurrection of the King, xxvi.-xxviii.



THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

OF the four gospels, Mark has been the least appreciated. Perhaps because it is the shortest. Many appear to regard it as a sort of abridgment of Matthew. Others write as if nothing remains for the expounder but to "note variations." In consequence, its place is almost a humble one. Happily, in recent expositions, a more just appreciation of its importance and worth is found. The Second Gospel has a beauty and force that is all its own. The mighty Servant of God, who is here so graphically presented to us, is no less attractive in His tireless ministry than in His royal prerogatives and saving power. The girded One is as lovely to the true heart as the arrayed One.

I. The author. The title is : *The Gospel according to Mark.* The words express the belief of the whole primitive church. There is not a dissentient voice. As far back as the history of the New Testament canon can be traced, the authorship of the Second Gospel is ascribed to Mark, and to no other. Twice he is called "John, whose surname is Mark" (Acts xii. 12, 25). John was his

Hebrew name, Mark, his Roman. The latter seems to have become his only name. He was not an apostle, though closely associated with the apostles. He was the assistant of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 5), and a relative of the latter (Col. iv. 10). Afterwards he was the fellow-laborer of Peter (1 Pet. v. 13).

II. The Second Gospel, according to ancient testimony, is substantially that preached by Peter. One of the earliest writers (Papias) says, "Mark was the interpreter of Peter." Another (Irenaeus), "He was the disciple and interpreter of Peter," and adds, "He gave forth to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter." This last sentence seems to be an explanation of the word "interpreter." Others bear the like witness.

Internal evidence supports this tradition. Instead of being put prominently forward as in the other gospels, in this Peter falls as much as possible in the background. Here we learn that the house at Capernaum into which Jesus withdrew was that of Simon and Andrew; Matthew and Luke mention Simon's name alone. Here we are told that Peter first noticed the withered condition of the fig tree which the word of the Lord had blasted; here he is singled out as the most culpable of those taken with the Lord into the garden; "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not

thou watch one hour?" The account of his denial of Jesus reads like one who was present, and who saw it all. In the message of the angel his name occurs, "Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." Such touches, slight as they may appear to be, are evidence that this Gospel is that of an eyewitness, and no doubt the witness was Peter himself. It is quite possible that the apostle referred especially to Mark, as the penman of his Gospel, when he wrote, "I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (2 Pet. i. 15).

III. Mark adheres closely to the chronological order of the events. He records them just as they successively took place. Luke is more strictly the historian. Matthew is somewhat topical. Mark follows faithfully the temporal sequence of the public ministry. In Matthew Jesus tests Israel. In Mark He serves Israel; and the service is traced from first to last as it was rendered. The only exception is in Mark iii. 18-22 (compare with Matt. ix. 14-18), where Mark seems to have departed from the exact order of events.

IV. The sphere of the Second Gospel. Mark is occupied exclusively with the Galilean ministry of Jesus. He does not allude to any ministry in Judæa until the Saviour goes to Jerusalem on His

final visit, there to finish His great mission by His sacrificial death. Mark starts his narrative of the ministry with the imprisonment of John the Baptist (i. 14). This fixes for us the date of the record—viz., the opening of the second year of our Lord's public work. The Fourth Gospel (chapters i.—iv.) precedes the record of Mark. The following events, described mostly by John, must be placed before Mark i. 14, 15—viz: (1) The Baptist's testimony to Jesus as the Lamb of God (John i. 19–34); (2) the early call of Andrew, John, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael (John i. 35–51); (3) marriage at Cana (John ii. 1–12); (4) first cleansing of the temple (John ii. 13–21); (5) interview with Nicodemus (John iii. 1–21); (6) journey from Judæa through Samaria to Galilee (John iv.); (7) John the Baptist imprisoned (Luke iii. 19–20). At this point Mark's Gospel begins.

V. Analysis. The Second Gospel may be conveniently divided into the following sections or parts :

Part I. The preparation, i. 1–13.

The Baptist's preaching, verses 1–8.

Jesus' baptism and temptation, verses 9–13.

Part II. Ministry in central Galilee, chapters i. 14–vii. 23.

This section comprises the ministry of three circuits through Galilee :

First circuit, i. 14–iii. 19.

Second circuit, iii. 20–v.

Third circuit, vi.–vii. 23.

The main subjects are the following :

1. Preaching the kingdom, i. 14, 15.
2. Call of first disciples, i. 16–20.
3. Various miracles, i. 21–45.
4. Commencement of conflict with rulers, chapters ii.–iii. 12.
5. Call for apostles, iii. 13–19.
6. Growing opposition, iii. 20–vi. 13.
7. Murder of John the Baptist and results, vi. 14–vii. 23.

Part III. Ministry in northern Galilee, vii. 24–ix.

Main subjects :

1. The Syro-phœnician and her daughter, vii. 24–30.
2. Various miracles, vii. 31–viii. 10.
3. Warnings against Pharisaic doctrines, viii. 11–21.
4. Blind man healed, viii. 22–26.
5. First clear prediction of Christ's death, viii. 31.
6. Transfiguration and second announcement of death, ix. 1–12.

7. Third announcement of death,
ix. 31, 32.

Part IV. Last journey to Jerusalem, chapters x, xi.

The journey was on the “farther side of the Jordan,” x. 1., *i. e.*, on the east side and through the province of Peræa.

1. Marriage and divorce.
2. Little children.
3. Rich young man.
4. Fourth prediction of death.
5. Blind Bartimæus.
6. Entry into Jerusalem.

Part V. Closing scenes, trial and death, xii.—xv.

1. Increasing hostility to Jesus.
2. His composure and triumph anticipated.
3. Minuteness of the narrative, almost a diary.
4. Incident of the young man in the garden (Mark himself, it is thought).

Part VI. Victory over the grave, and ascension, xvi.

VI. Retirements of Jesus from His active serv-

ice. Several such retirements or withdrawals are traceable, of which more particular mention will be made further on.

VII. From the preceding analysis we deduce the main design of Mark. Clearly this is the Gospel of the Ministry of Christ. The opening sentence indicates the chief aim of the inspired record: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (i. 1). This is quite apart from the others. Matthew begins with the Lord's Jewish and covenant relations; Luke with the details of His birth, childhood, and growth; John starts with the eternity and divinity of the Word; but Mark passes all this by. After a brief reference to John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism and temptation, he enters at once upon the narrative of the Ministry (chapter i. 14, R. V.). "Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God." (The words "the kingdom of God" are omitted in nearly all modern critical editions.)

The facts contained in Mark are almost all found in Matthew. In Mark, Jesus is seen doing the same things as in Matthew. But the same facts are employed to present different phases of His complex character and office. He is the King-Messiah in Matthew. He is the Servant of Jehovah in Mark. In the former He is fulfilling the Old Testament predictions of the

Deliverer ; in the latter He is fulfilling the will of God, and doing man's neglected duty. But in serving men He is serving the Father, for the Father's pleasure and the Father's glory were His sole end. Of all men He alone could say, "O Lord, truly I am Thy Servant," and then perfectly fulfill what He spoke (Ps. exvi.).

While Mark is acquainted with Christ's manifold offices, and refers to them in common with the other evangelists, he yet makes prominent one chief feature of His mission—viz., His blessed service. Keeping this great truth clearly before him, the evangelist here traces the Lord's ways in His public ministry ; he constructs his narrative, and even chooses words and phrases that promote his main purpose and that lend vividness and power to his record. Some of these peculiarities of the Second Gospel we are briefly to study.

1. The use of the word "straightway." It is Mark's characteristic term, his key-word. He employs it forty-two times (Authorized Version), while the other gospels have it but thirty-three times. It is found eleven times in the first chapter, as if Mark would thus certify the importance he attaches to it at the very beginning. The latest critical text exhibits the more compressed form,¹ while in the other gospels the longer term² pre-

¹ εἰθίς.

² εἰθέως.

vails. The Revised Version uniformly translates it by the same English synonym, "straightway," the Authorized Version by a variety of terms, "anon," "forthwith," "immediately," etc. It is worthy of note also that in a large number of places Mark inserts it at the opening of his sentence, setting it thus in the emphatic position. Considerable latitude marks its use—*e. g.*, the Lord's activity; certain salient features in parables; the murder of John the Baptist; the call of certain disciples; the possessed of demons; and the trial and condemnation of Jesus. But whatever its connection, it uniformly designates rapidity of movement, promptness of action. This will appear when we consider some of the places where it occurs.

In chapter i. 10 it is used for the first time in Mark—"And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him." (R. V.) Matthew also has it (iii. 16), but more closely with the baptism than does Mark who joins it with the ordinance, with the rending of the heavens, and the descent of the spirit, thus bringing out both the rapidity and the unity of the events. In Matthew (iii. 17) the Father's voice speaks of Christ, testifying His delight in Him; in Mark He speaks to Christ, for now at length a man is here on earth who perfectly does His will,

and who will glorify His holy name. He is the second Adam, and God's beloved Son.

“And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness” (i. 12, R. V.). The temptation follows “straightway” upon the baptism. Neither Matthew nor Luke has the word in their account. Mark alone adopts it. And the two words, “straightway” and “driveth” import the energy and the swiftness with which He was brought to the scene of the extraordinary trial. There is something startling, almost violent, in the action implied in this language, as if He were hurried on and impelled forward by an impulse not His own. We know, however, from Matthew's and Luke's milder “led,” that He voluntarily submitted to this supreme test. What compression and power are found in the brief account: “And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.” Each phrase deepens and intensifies the graphic words “and straightway the Spirit driveth him forth.” A strange sternness gathers about the scene as the holy Son of God is thus seen going forth under the divine propulsion to face that strong fierce spirit whose assaults, so disastrous in the trial of the first Adam, shall prove powerless and vain with the second Adam. It reminds one of that other impressive scene (Mark x. 32) where Jesus went

before His disciples, striding on with set face to meet the solemn and awful tragedy that awaited Him at Jerusalem. In neither the one nor the other case was there reluctance or recoil. For here was one in the wilderness who had not forfeited Eden ; who was with the wild beasts, not wild to Him ; and to whom as to the first man the serpent came, but found nothing in Him. The angels were the astonished witnesses of His temptation and His victory. As God's servant He exposed Himself to all, but was in no danger.

In chapter i. 20 the call of James and John is recorded, and we read, "and straightway he called them." Matthew inserts the word in connection with their leaving the ship and their father (iv. 22). It thus seems that on seeing the two brothers Jesus at once summoned them to become His followers and friends, and they as promptly obeyed. Swiftness of movement and decision are expressed by the term. Devotion to His ministry is indicated in the same way by His entering the synagogue and teaching on the Sabbath (i. 21).

Mark records the parable of the sower, and characteristically says of the seed that fell by the wayside, "straightway cometh Satan and taketh away the word that had been sown" (iv. 15). Neither Matthew nor Luke uses "straightway" in their record of the Lord's interpretation (Mat-

thew xiii. 19 ; Luke viii. 12). So, too, in the parable of the seed growing secretly (the only parable recorded by Mark alone), the word is introduced : “ But when the fruit is brought forth, straightway he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come ” (iv. 29). Silently and gradually the seed grows until fully ripe, then straightway it is gathered and garnered by the husbandman. The illustration holds both as to the individual believer and the whole body of the redeemed. The one is taken, and all are taken, to be with Christ when maturity is attained, when the body is complete. The parable teaches the beginning, the growth, and the swift consummation of the gospel dispensation, which terminates with the advent of the Son of man and the rapture of the saints. (Cp. I. Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

When with the disciples Jesus had passed over the lake into the country of the Gadarenes, “ straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit ” (v. 1-15). Christ’s presence seems instantly to have aroused the hope and the fear, the homage and the horror of this poor demoniac, for “ he ran and worshiped him,” “ I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Attraction and repulsion alternated in his distracted mind. The best and the worst in him struggled for the mastery in the presence of the Deliverer ; for wherever Jesus went ceaseless

activity distinguished Him ; He was in constant antagonism with the world of evil spirits, and with human ills of every sort. In chapter xv. 1, the word “straightway” occurs for the last time in our book, and it there describes the murderous haste with which the priests and rulers hurried their patient captive to the bar of Pilate. They “bound him,” although He offered no resistance and uttered no protest : “and carried him away,” although He went as a lamb to the slaughter.

From these examples we are justified in concluding that neither from habit, nor by accident, nor yet for rhetorical embellishment, does the evangelist introduce so frequently this word “straightway ;” he does so because it exactly serves his purpose and so admirably fits into his design : for the Second Gospel may be described as a portrait of God’s indefatigable Servant who never pauses in His work nor falters in His devotion till all is done. It is a series of vivid pictures, “cartoons,” as one aptly says, we here have of Jesus, ever busy about His Father’s work and will. Therefore the events so rapidly succeed each other. Swiftly and unerringly the mighty Minister moves on to the end, the final consummation. It is His marvelous activity we are made to see. How appropriate, therefore, is this descriptive term “straightway” which the evangelist so often and unexpectedly introduces, and

so suggestively connects with the deeds and events of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ here is seen “unhasting, unresting.”

2. The titles and names which are given to Jesus by those who address him evince Mark’s design. The gospels record many instances of persons who came to him with questions and requests. Many of these petitioners were sincere seekers after help and light. They came seeking deliverance for loved ones, and for aid in their difficulties and distresses. But there were others who were open or secret foes of Jesus, whose inquiries were prompted by malice and meant to insnare him. These all addressed our Saviour by a variety of titles, such as Rabbi, Master, Lord, Son of David, and Son of God. But in no case do they call him Son of man. In all the New Testament but three times does He receive this name of Son of man from others, and two of these but echo His own use of it (John. xii. 34); the other is Stephen’s dying utterance (Acts vii. 56). It is Christ’s self-chosen name, appropriated by Himself exclusively, and always implies in His lips His incorporation with our kind and His possession of a higher nature with which His manhood stands in contrast. As Son of man He is a true member of our race; is its pattern and representative, the Son of mankind. As Son of man He is more, infinitely more; for His

manhood is a rope which he Has thrown round a higher form of preëxistent life, even His proper deity.

Now, the Gospel by Mark widely differs from the others in its bestowal of the divine name of Lord (*Kurios*) on the Saviour. Thus the evangelist twice gives Him this great name, and in both cases after His resurrection, when His humiliation was passed and the earthly ministry was over; xvi. 19, "So then after the Lord [Jesus] had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven"; xvi. 20, "The Lord working with them." Jesus employs this name when speaking of himself also twice; v. 19, "Go home to thy friends and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and had compassion on thee;" xi. 3, "Say ye, the Lord hath need of him." In His argument drawn from Psalm ex. 35-37 He clearly implies His perfect right to its appropriation to Himself, but does not take it as His own. By those who address Him He is, in the Second Gospel, uniformly called Master (*Rabbi*), or Teacher (*Didaskalos*). Thus, in Matt. viii. 2, the leper says: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." But in Mark i. 40 the title is omitted, and he says: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." In Matt. viii. 25 the terrified disciples awake Him out of His sleep, saying: "Lord, save us; we perish." But in the corre-

sponding place in Mark we find, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (iv. 38). In Matt. xviii. 4 Peter says: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." In Mark: "Master, it is good for us to be here" (ix. 5). In Matt. xvii. 15 the father of the lunatic child says: "Lord, have mercy on my son"; in Mark ix. 17 he says: "Master, I have brought unto thee my son." In Mark ix. 24 we read in our Common Version, "Lord, I believe"; but in the Revised Version, and in every critical Greek text examined, the title "Lord" is omitted; the father of the suffering child only says: "I believe." Luke records that blind Bartimæus said: "Lord, that I may receive my sight" (Luke xviii. 41). In Matthew's account of the cure of two blind men, one of whom no doubt was Bartimæus, we find the great name: "Lord, that our eyes may be opened" (Matt. xx. 33). But Mark has "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight" (x. 51, R. V.). In Matt. xxvi. 22 each of the disciples asks concerning the one of their number that was to betray Him: "Lord, is it I?"¹ But in Mark xiv.

¹ The title Lord is applied in the New Testament to others besides Jesus, and denotes the rank of the one addressed and the respect due him. In some instances likewise it is given to the Saviour in the same sense (John iv. 11). But the apostles at the Supper did not thus bestow it on Him. They knew Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as Peter's confession certainly declares (Matt. xvi. 16; Mark

19 they "say unto him one by one, Is it I?" Here, as in all the other instances cited, the divine title of Lord is omitted. It is very remarkable that in no one of the four gospels does Judas Iscariot ever address Him by the name of Lord. Thus, after they had each asked, "Lord, is it I?" Judas said: "Master, is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 25). Thus likewise in John xiv. 22 the Judas who calls him Lord is carefully distinguished from Iscariot; for Iscariot never gave Him this name. "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Judas never had the Spirit in His regenerating and sanctifying power.

There is only one exception in Mark to this uniform method of addressing the Saviour. It is the address of the Syro-Phœnician woman in vii. 28. She was a Greek, of an abhorred race, a Canaanite, a reprobate of reprobates, with no claim whatever on the mercy and help of Christ, such as a Jewess might urge; the pagan mother of a demoniac child. In her plea for help she modestly yet very sagaciously and trustingly seizes upon a single word in Jesus' reply to her viii. 8). John also attests their belief in His superhuman knowledge and His mission from the Father (John xvi. 30. Indeed, the valedictory address is based on their faith in Him as the Son of God, John xiv.-xvii.). Hence they must have meant more than mere regard, or honorable distinction, when they called Him Lord: they meant by the title that He was divine, and their Lord and Master (John xiii. 13, 14).

cry for deliverance: "Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs." "Dogs"! How stern, almost repellent the answer sounds! But it was the diminutive name Jesus used, found nowhere else in the New Testament save here and Matt. xv. 26, 27. It signifies "little dogs;" is almost equivalent to our colloquial "doggie." It cannot apply to those fierce, strong brutes that prowl the streets, and that are owned and claimed by none. Rather, it points to those household creatures that are considered pets; domestic dogs, not those "without." That word, "little dogs," she accepts, appropriates. "Yes, Lord: yet the little dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." On this word she rests her hope, finds her clew to His heart, and presses her suit. "Yes, Lord"; for in that lowly form she discovered the mighty Lord, the God of glory, and she won her suit.

This peculiarity harmonizes with the main design of Mark—viz., to present Jesus to us as the Minister of God, the Servant of Jehovah. It is fitting therefore that He should receive the names which appropriately belong to Him as such. Here He veils His glory, robes Himself in the garments of patient and quiet service; is the obedient One; "for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to

give his life a ransom for many" (x. 45). Therefore, while His authority and power are fully recognized, nevertheless here He receives but sparingly the supreme titles of the great God. In Matthew they are plentifully bestowed, for there He is the great king, the heavenly Sovereign; in Luke also, for there he is the divine Saviour, the Kinsman-Redeemer; in John likewise, for there he is the Son of God, Himself God. But in Mark He is the Son who is the Servant, and this is the feature mainly that the Holy Spirit here traces.

Closely akin to this scanty use of the divine names given to Jesus in Mark is the profoundly significant question of chapter vi. 3, "Is not this the carpenter?" Matthew writes that the incredulous Nazarenes asked, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (xiii. 55). But Mark alone tells us that He was Himself a carpenter, that He toiled with His own hands at the carpenter's bench, and no doubt was often covered with the dust and shavings of that trade. It has been conjectured that Joseph was now dead, and that the support of the family devolved mainly upon Jesus. An ancient Father (Justin Martyr), reports the tradition that He made yokes and plows and other agricultural implements. It may reverently be conjectured that He did the work of the joiner and builder likewise. We may be sure that what He

wrought was faithfully and honestly done, that nothing left His hands in which worthless material found place, or to which poor workmanship attached. The yoke He made rested easy and comfortable on the ox's neck, causing no abrasion of the skin. The plow He wrought exactly served its purpose, and turned the furrow as it should. The same integrity and faithfulness which are seen attaching to His public ministry marked also His toil at the bench.

What an amazing scene this is ! The Son of God, the maker of the worlds and the ages, welding the ax and driving the plane and the saw in that humble carpenter's shop of Nazareth ! What may it mean ? We are told that every Jewish lad was taught some useful trade. Even the rabbis had to learn some handicraft. Paul was a tentmaker. And the Lord Jesus, a true Israelite, followed willingly the example of His reputed father, Joseph, who was a carpenter. He has forever ennobled industry, honest toil ; He has invested it with a dignity that it never had before, and that it must wear unsullied while the earth remains. The world's toilers, the tired millions, may well consider Nazareth's carpenter, and find in Him their weary labor transfigured into a noble service for God, and their drudgery into a glad independence. The

greatest of the apostles could proudly say, "These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts xx. 34). Paul had the very spirit of the carpenter of Nazareth.

But there is more in this wondrous statement touching the Master. He was God's minister in the world. As such He joyfully came down into all the actual circumstances of our humanity. He indentified Himself with us and with all that belongs to us as men, sin only apart. God's minister must become a man, and take upon Himself the relations and the duties of a man. Therefore with His own hands He wrought, and ate His bread in the sweat of His face, as do we. He was Jehovah's workman, and must serve. But no less was He pleasing to God in the carpenter shop than when preaching the good news of the kingdom, and working His mighty miracles. As certainly He did God's will at the bench as when He wrought redemption for us, for His whole life was one of service, obedience, perfect submission to the Father's will, God's blessed Servant.

To the same class belongs that other remarkable saying of our Lord: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (xiii. 32.) He declares that even He

does not know the exact time of His second advent. Difficult as the statement is, it is not more difficult than the scene in John xi. where we are told that Jesus' face was wet with human tears, while the almighty voice commanded, "Lazarus, come forth." His human and divine natures are present and blend, yet are most distinct. But let us note two things respecting the Olivet prophecy, which, by the way, is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. (1) Christ in it does not speak as do Daniel, John, and other prophets in their predictions. These all assert that they received their messages from God, that they did not speak of themselves, but that God spake through them. But Christ speaks throughout this great discourse as one who Himself knows the things He utters. He does not let fall a hint that it was at the time communicated to Him by the Holy Spirit. It is He that sees the events He describes, and He foretells and foretells the future. (2) He knows the precise events and their sequence both preceding and succeeding His coming. All that goes before, and all that follows His advent He clearly knows, and tells so much of it as pleases Him. The day and the hour He does not know. It is very suggestive that, according to the received text, it is only in Mark where this phrase, "neither the Son," occurs—in the Gospel of the

Servant of God. Is it because as Servant it was not given Him to know it? Is it because of His mediatorial character here so graphically portrayed, that it was not a part of His service to reveal it? We do not know. Up to that exact point, He knows what is coming; after that point, He knows what will take place. On that exact point, the day and the hour, rests the hand of Omnipotence, concealing it; it must not be made known. And Christ, the obedient one, is perfectly content that it should lie concealed.

3. The Silences of Mark. The omissions of the Second Gospel are remarkable and significant; for, as often said, the silences of Scripture are scarcely less suggestive than the utterances. Only so much of the Baptist's ministry is recorded as is necessary to lead up to the anointing and certification of Jesus from heaven. With like brevity is the temptation in the wilderness introduced, and this because it is introductory to Mark's main object—viz., the ministry of Him who was to cope successfully with Satan's power. Then the evangelist turns at once to the narration of the ministry, and follows it to the end. There is complete silence as to all that preceded Jesus' public work. Nothing of His birth, His lineage, His childhood, or His youth is here related. Scarcely any reference is found to His mother and His relatives; they are intro-

dueed incidentally, as needful to complete the narrative; and attention is called to them, not by the Lord nor the writer, but by the multitude (iii. 21, 32; vi. 3). Mark has no sermon on the mount, no formal and full declaration of the principles of the kingdom of God, no woes pronounced on the guilty towns of Galilee which had witnessed unmoved and unaffected His mighty works; no predictions of impending doom for Jerusalem, such as Matthew and Luke record. In fact, Mark reports few of the Lord's discourses. Here He is *doing*, not *teaching*. Service, ministry, with the salient features belonging thereto, is the great theme. There are but four parables recorded by Mark, and one of them alone is peculiar to him—viz., the seed growing secretly, a parable of service (ix. 26-28). He is the sower, He watches over the grain with tender solicitude, and at the end He is the reaper. In chapter xiii. He unveils the future with the authority of a prophet of God, but He does not here tell of the "talents" committed to men, nor of His judgment as to their use and non-use, nor of the judgment of the nations, as He does in Matthew. In the three parables common to the other gospels it is obvious that the main idea is that of service: the sower, mustard seed, and the vineyard and husbandmen. They appear to be selected because of their manifest adaptation

to the purpose which the inspired writer has in view. So likewise in the miracles of this Gospel Jesus is seen meeting human need, delivering the oppressed and afflicted. In feeding the hungry multitudes, in healing diseases, in casting out evil spirits, there are touches which exhibit the spirit and temper of His service that are most suggestive and beautiful.

In the third chapter there is told the story of the call and ordination of the twelve, but the account of their mission and instructions is not so full as in Matthew x. There is a little phrase found in it that we do well to consider, for it fits into the main design of Mark with admirable nicely. It is this: "And he ordained twelve that they should be with him" (iii. 14). They were to be His companions as well as His missionaries; His friends and helpers as well as His servants. "That they should be with him" to share His journeys, His solitude, His trials, and His triumphs: His fellow-laborers; His associates rather than dependents. They were to know Him and His mind, His methods and ways, by personal intimacy and fellowship. They were to learn from Him how to work and to wait, to serve and to suffer. This and the like touches show us "the girdle wherewith he was girded."

4. Christ's devotion to His ministry is another

significant feature of the Second Gospel. The essence of all true service is fidelity, unswerving loyalty. Other servants of God have been distinguished for this supreme excellence of character. Scripture bears this very noteworthy testimony of Moses : "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth" (Num. xii. 7, 8; cp. Heb. iii. 6). No higher eulogy could be pronounced. The steady patience and constancy of Moses in the mighty work given him to do are almost without a parallel in the history of our race. Of David likewise it is written that "after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." Although a king to whom his subjects paid glad and willing homage, David none the less was himself a servant of God, and his life was passed in serving his own generation. So likewise Paul's marvelous career was one of tireless devotion to the name and honor and glory of Christ. But Jesus in this as in all His other relations to God and men holds the preëminence. Although a Son over His own house, the Lord also of the house, He became a Servant therein, and "was faithful to him that appointed him" (Heb. iii. 2). The other servants might grow weary with their heavy task, as we know they often did ; they might relax their energies, and sigh for release. But nothing of

this is found in Jehovah's loyal and obedient Servant, Christ. The want of appreciation and sympathy on the part of His disciples, the malice and rage of Satan, the apathy and unbelief of the multitude, and the bitter hostility of the rulers, could not quench His zeal nor chill His constancy nor hinder His purpose, though the attitude of the nation toward Him might fill His heart with sorrow and His eyes with tears.

The other evangelists magnify our Lord's devotion to the work given Him to do. They exhibit Him as the perfect pattern of obedience, and the highest example of faithfulness. They describe Him as altogether true to His exalted mission, as doing always the things that pleased the Father, and as never seeking His own glory nor His own will (John v. 30; viii. 29, 50). But in Mark peculiar stress is placed on the tenacity with which the Lord held fast to His ministry, and the diligence with which He prosecuted it to the very end.

He seems to have abridged the hours of repose in order to give Himself wholly to His work. Thus we read that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (i. 35). The day before (Sabbath) in Capernaum had been one of constant service, of healing and teaching, till "the sun did set," enough to tax the energies

and the strength even of the Son of man. He needed rest and sleep to restore His physical power. But little rest, however, was taken ; for He needed prayer more than sleep, and so "rising up a great while before day" He retired to the solitary place where He might be alone with God. His solitude was interrupted by Peter and the other disciples who pursued Him, announcing that all men sought Him ; and with no sign of impatience He at once addressed Himself to His work, supplying the wants of the needy crowds.

On another occasion, when the apostles had returned from their mission and reported to Him, He said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (vi. 30, 31). But the multitude, who had watched them, surprised them in their retreat. Moved with compassion for them, He at once turns and begins to teach, and to relieve their hunger. It would have been a valued moment to Him which He might have spent alone with the disciples, for they needed His instructions as well as the people ; but the deeper necessity of the latter wins His immediate attention. It was but one service giving place to another. When the day was done He sent away the multitude, then the apostles also, that He might spend a season in private supplication (vi. 46, 47). But He kept watch over the disciples as they toiled in rowing ; He saw that the

storm was endangering them ; and so He came to them upon the water about the fourth watch of the night (vi. 48). Perhaps He got no sleep that night. How diligent as well as compassionate a servant He was !

So, also, in chapter iv. we read of another storm on the lake. He had spent another day of hard and weary toil among the needy people. "And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship" (verse 36). The phrase, "even as he was," is peculiar to Mark, though that of John (iv. 6) reminds us of it. It imports His weariness and exhaustion, the result of the day's taxing labor. "And he was asleep in the hinder part of the ship on a pillow," the cushion for rest found ordinarily in the boat's stern—the tired, patient worker. Contrast this scene with that recorded in John iv. 6 ; "He sat thus on the well" at Sychar, weary here likewise as in the boat that evening, hungry too and thirsty, waiting the return of the disciples with food. But when they came back they found Him feasted and rested already ; the joy of harvest was His ; for a poor, careless sinner had been made happy by His gracious words. In Mark there was no woman of Samaria sent away with the glad consciousness of salvation. But in John His spirit is refreshed by the fruit of His labor, and He

can do without food or sleep. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" is His word there, in the stead of the pillow here. In both these instances we see in Him the limitations of His manhood with its sinless infirmities. In Mark He is exhausted and sleeps. But when the terrified disciples arouse Him with their half-reproachful question, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" He quietly rebukes the wind and calms the angry sea. Did He return to sleep? We are not told. In John, hunger and thirst are forgotten in the glad service of saving a lost soul. In both accounts His humanity and deity are manifest; but in that of John pre-eminence is given the divine side of His complex personality.

Other evidences of the Saviour's devotion to His ministry as portrayed in this Gospel are not wanting. As we have seen, here our blessed Lord rests but little, scarcely pauses in His gracious service. So great were the crowds that thronged His ministry, so accessible was He (for, as one has well said, "He was the most accessible of men"), so eager was He to relieve and to bless, that neither He nor His disciples had opportunity or time "even to eat bread" (iii. 20; vi. 31)—statements found only in Mark. In chapter iii. 31 we are informed that "there came then his brethren and his mother, and, stand-

ing without, sent unto him, calling him." So compact was the multitude encircling Him that these His relatives could not reach His presence and directly address Him; hence their message. From verse 21 of this chapter we learn the motive of their errand—"And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said he is beside himself." When His friends saw Him so bent upon His great mission as to neglect His bodily necessities, and the consuming zeal that possessed Him, they imagined that His mind had given way. No worse suspicion ever darkened the minds of those who knew Him best. But why was the mother with them? Did she share the notion that He was "beside himself"? Anxiety and concern she certainly felt for her wondrous Son, probably nothing more. No doubt she was induced to accompany them from Nazareth to the place where Jesus now was that she might persuade Him to return to the quiet home, at least until the excitement of Galilee should subside, and He gain the much needed rest and refreshment. But what a graphic picture does this strange incident, recorded by Mark alone, give us of his devotion to His ministry, His self-denying service!

His attentiveness to His ministry appears in His *look*, so often mentioned in the book. When His mother and brethren sent Him the message

of which we have just been speaking, we read, “And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!” So also we are told in iii. 5 that “he looked round about on them with anger,” but we are immediately informed that this was not the anger of one who has taken the seat of judgment, but of one who was grieved at heart for the hardness and unbelief of men. A like careful observance is seen in the cure of the woman with the bloody issue (v. 25–34) who so quietly touched His clothes—“And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.” It is significant that Mark adopts the form of the word for “look” expressive of continued action—“He kept looking round about,” as it might be interpreted. Of course the Lord knew, as Peter and the others did not know. It was a question like that to Adam, “Where art thou?” Did He grudge that the healing virtue had been extracted in that secret way? No, she was healed. But she must confess Him, her healer and Lord, before the people, else one main purpose of the cure would be lost; therefore He looked round about to see her—such was the care and thoughtfulness He gave to each detail of His blessed service.

In the exquisite account of the rich young ruler we are told that Jesus “beholding him

loved him" (x. 21). It was an earnest, tender, and searching look with which the Lord regarded him, one that pierced to the central deeps of his being, detecting his pride, self-righteousness, and weakness.

Moreover, His attentiveness in the prosecution of His work appears in His *touch*. Thus, in the healing of the mother of Simon Peter's wife, we are told "he took her by the hand and lifted her up." Matthew says "he touched her hand" (viii. 15); Luke, that He "stood over her and rebuked the fever" (iv. 38). In Mark there is closer contact with the suffering patient and effective help expressed. The description of the Lord's healing the deaf man who had an impediment in his speech is most vivid. He first removed him from the distracting presence of the crowd; then He put His fingers in his ears, touched his tongue with saliva from His own lips; and, looking up to heaven, He sighed and said to him, *Ephphatha, be opened*. By signs which the man could understand Jesus sought to arrest his attention, stimulate his expectation and his faith. But no less was His own mind concentrated upon the miracle which He wrought. So, too, He took the blind man by the hand, led him out of the village, put saliva on his eyes, put His hands upon his eyes, and bade him look up (viii. 23-25). Little children were brought that

He should touch them ; and He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them (x. 13-16).

In Mark likewise we have glimpses of the sorrows that attended His ministry. We read that He sighed (vii. 34); sighed deeply (viii. 12); that He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts (iii. 5); that He marveled because of their unbelief (vi. 6). Only twice in the gospels do we read of His marveling : here at the unbelief of his fellow-townsman of Nazareth, and at the wondrous display of faith by the Roman officer (Matt. viii. 10).

It is common to regard these details touching the gestures and looks of the Lord Jesus as characteristic of Mark's graphic style, as "poetic objectivity," as proof that Peter's "fiery spirit pervades the book," as indicative of "stormful haste." No doubt these touches lend vividness and beauty to the narrative. But is this all ? May not this be a very subordinate element ? Once we accept the view that this Gospel, as all Scripture, is the product of the Spirit, we are shut up to the conviction that something more than picturesqueness is meant by the minuteness of Mark, that what the evangelist more especially aims at is to set forth in graphic words the intentness with which Jehovah's exalted Servant prosecuted the ministry appointed Him.

5. Another marked feature of Christ's ministry is its unobtrusiveness. All through this Gospel Jesus seems anxious not to draw attention to Himself or His work. He deprecates publicity. In His unselfish humility He is as one naturally contented with obscurity; as lacking the restless desire for eminence which is so common in really great men; as disliking competition and disputes as to who should be greatest; as eager and careful that even His miracles should not add to His reputation. In the midst of His marvelous activities there is observable in His ways a quiet reserve, an absence of self-assertion, which is most attractive in a servant. He will not even thrust His power to heal upon those who seek it not, nor wish it. He will even take the patient whom He heals into a sort of fellowship with Himself, asking him to be willing to believe. Where unbelief reigns He can do no mighty work (vi. 5, 6), but turns away and seeks other and more congenial fields. When He retired for the time into the parts of Tyre and Sidon we are told He would have no man know it. He sought a privaey which both He and the apostles needed. But the evangelist adds immediately that "he could not be hid" (vii. 24). In His last tour through Galilee "he would not that any man should know it" (ix. 30). There are many reasons why He sought this

privacy. The chief one was that as He had borne His testimony to the people, had wrought the deeds of Messiah in their presence and now was virtually refused and rejected, no further testimony to them would avail; the nation had declared its mind, had chosen its course; accordingly, nothing could now be done but complete the ministry by the death of Jehovah's Servant. Unsought and unwelcome, He will not thrust Himself upon them further.

At Decapolis He took the deaf man aside privately; and when He had him by himself He cured him, charging him to say nothing about it (vii. 36). When He had restored sight to a blind man He sent him home with the injunction, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (viii. 26). Both Matthew and Luke tell of His charging those whom He had healed not to publish it abroad. Mark commonly adds a word or an expression that gives characteristic distinctiveness to his narrative. Thus when He had raised Jairus' daughter to life we read, "He charged them straitly that no man should know it" (v. 43). This Matthew omits; Luke records it, but leaves out the expressive "straitly." In like manner He sternly refuses the witness of demons who recognized the Son of God in that lowly form; He would have no attestation from so foul a source (i. 25-34;

iii. 12, etc.). But even in these instances Mark has touches that indicate how closely he adheres to his plan. Here the Lord unwearily prosecutes His work; and if it gather notice, His way is still to go on, and under fresh services still to hide himself. Thus when Peter and other disciples break in upon His retirement with their "all men seek for thee" (i. 37), as though the multitude would make Him public, He hides Himself under fresh labors, saying, "Let us go into the next towns and preach there also, for therefore came I forth." Now and then we see Him with the robe on, as in the transfiguration scene, but it is speedily put off, and the girdle as speedily put on.

6. Another feature of the Lord's ministry made prominent in Mark is His retirement. It is quite true that Mark is the historian of Christ's activities. Here Jesus is seen *doing*. Here He is Jehovah's obedient and tireless Servant. But in beautiful harmony with this main idea of the Second Gospel, the great Worker ever and anon withdraws from the public gaze and the public service to rest and refresh Himself. In almost every case His retirements and His seclusion were temporary and brief, and for specific ends. Generally they mark a change or a crisis in His work. Some of them are here noted.

(1) For prayer (i. 35). The previous day had

been a long one of conflict with and victory over the kingdom of sin and death. He now retires that He may be refreshed and strengthened for further and even more taxing labors. He prepares Himself in the desert for a second great mission of love. It is by prayer and conscious communion with the living God that His activities and self-sacrificing devotion to His work are fed.

(2) From Pharisaic opposition (iii. 6, 7). The withdrawal was from the synagogue of Capernaum to the open coast, and from the plots of His enemies, plots which ripen fast in cities, those hotbeds of intrigue. Herein He displays a wise prudence. The effect of the miracle He had wrought—that of healing the withered hand—was very great. The scribes and Pharisees were “filled with madness” (Luke vi. 11). The Saviour had not merely broken their tradition, but He had put them to silence before all the people. They sought, therefore, to slay Him. But something deeper and more needful even than personal safety moved Him to withdraw. The twelve are to be selected and appointed to their great mission (iii. 14).

(3) From unbelief (vi. 5, 6). Mighty things are ascribed to faith; “all things are possible to him that believeth” (ix. 23). But no less is unbelief strong. “And he could there do no

mighty work . . . and He marveled because of their unbelief." A fearful power is lodged in the human will ; it can defeat even the gracious purposes of the Lord Himself. Mark, the inspired historian of Christ's energy and activities, tells us that at Nazareth He could do no mighty work because of unbelief. "Unbelief ties up the hand of God." And so Jesus retired from His own town never again to return to it. Yet, here also another blessed end is subserved—viz., the sending forth of the twelve on their errand of mercy (vi. 7).

(4) Retirement at the death of John the Baptist (vi. 31, 32). The flaming messenger of Jehovah, the New Testament Elijah was slain by the New Testament Ahab, Herod Antipas. John's death fell as a lieavy shadow on the path of Jesus, for it was a personal menace ; it foreshadowed His own rejection and crucifixion (ix. 9–13). But here likewise the withdrawal is succeeded by a wondrous ministry, *i. e.*, as the hostility intensifies His display of power increases. He feeds five thousand, and walks on the sea as on dry land.

(5) After conflict with the Pharisees (vii. 24). The Pharisaeic party in Eastern Galilee were deeply offended with His teaching (Matt. xv. 12) ; Herod was inquiring about Him (Luke ix. 9), and his inquiries boded nothing but ill. Jesus

accordingly withdrew into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. But here also His retirement is marked by a most significant act, namely, that of curing the demoniac daughter of a heathen mother, a prediction and promise of deliverance to flow out to the whole gentile world; for Christ at Tyre "domesticated the heathen world," as one has said.

(6) To Cæsarea Philippi (viii. 27). A crisis is here to be noted in His ministry. He withdraws from direct evangelistic effort, and the character of His teaching undergoes a change. Now for the first time in this Gospel He announces His approaching death (viii. 31). Six days after, the transfiguration took place (ix. 1, 2). The retirement was of deliberate intention. He will fix in their minds the tremendous fact of His rejection by the people of Israel, and the tragic end now so near at hand. But He will thrill their hearts also with the assurance of His resurrection and power and glory (2 Pet. i. 16-21).

(7) Retirement to Bethany (xi. 11, 19). "He looked round about upon all things, and . . . he went out unto Bethany with the twelve." This significant inspection and the subsequent withdrawal were followed the next day by the blasting of the barren fig tree, and by the expulsion of the greedy traffickers from the temple (xi. 11-19). Both were signs to Israel, deep, ominous

signs, if only they had had eyes to see and hearts to read and apply their meaning. At the beginning of His ministry He had purged the sacred precincts of these unseemly traders (John ii. 14). But they returned again, tolerated if not joined by the scribes and priests themselves (xi. 18). How deep the corruption had sunk into the nation's life the incident only too clearly evinced. How insensible the heart to the holy claims of God and to purity in His worship when the "house of prayer" is turned by zealous ritualists into a "den of robbers"! The fruitless fig tree, therefore, with its abundant leaves—holding out a false promise, a delusion and a cheat—becomes thus the fitting symbol of the rulers and people, with their empty profession and their heartless formalism. Its blasting was at once both a parable and a prophecy: a parable, teaching the power of believing prayer; a prophecy of Israel's impending judgment. Like the blasted tree, poor Israel stands to this day a blackened ruin, seathed with lightning, leafless as well as fruitless. Is it forever? So the words seem to intimate: "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever." Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, answers: "I say, then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. xi. 1, 2). In the words our Lord employed, there is a merciful limitation—a

hint that Israel is not totally and finally cast off. “Forever” is literally “for the age.” “No man eat fruit of thee henceforward for the age” (Trench). The day will come, perhaps is not now far off, when poor Israel with her age-long sufferings will be restored to the favor and allegiance of God, and be clothed with the richest fruits of all trees of the Lord’s planting.

The Saviour’s retirements in Mark were but recruitings for fresh service, or a preparation for a change of service, or withdrawals from an opposition which He would not precipitate. The final crisis and consummation must come only at the predetermined time, and He would do nought to hasten it. So truly human was He that He needed rest and refreshment, as do we all. But He suffered such retirement to be intruded upon, if the people and their necessities would have it so; for His time He did not claim for Himself. No impatient word escaped His lips, no look betokened His disappointment when His rest was interrupted; for He was here to serve, not to be served (x. 45). He was not our servant, but God’s. In serving man He but fulfilled the will of God, which was His paramount aim.

7. This Servant and Minister was Himself the Lord of Glory. While Mark has for his chief theme the perfect service of the Lord Jesus, and while he adheres to it with unwavering steadfast-

ness, nevertheless all through the narrative there keep flashing out the gleams and rays of one who is more than man, who is the Son of God, the equal of the Father. The cloak which this divine Servant wears is an earthly one, the one He in His matchless grace and love took upon Him when He came to do our neglected duty and save us from our sins, but ever and anon the cloak is allowed to swing open, and lo, there is seen blazing on His breast the star of supreme royalty.

Christ's divine power appears in Mark in the record of His miracles. Eighteen are found in this Gospel, distributed thus: over diseases, *eight* (i. 30, 31; i. 40-42; ii. 3-12; iii. 1-5; v. 25-34; vii. 32-35; viii. 22-25; x. 46-52). Over nature, *five* (iv. 36-39; vi. 41-44; vi. 48-51; viii. 1-9; xi. 11-14, 20). Over demons, *four* (i. 23-28; v. 1-13; vii. 24-30; ix. 17-27). Over death, *one* (v. 35-42). In all these mighty works He acts as the Almighty, the Creator and Ruler. He deals with leprosy as the Jehovah of Israel alone could deal with it. He feeds the thousands of His people as Jehovah of old had fed them. The elements bow to His word in obedience to His divine will. Demons tremble and obey, and men feel the majesty of His presence. Perfect as was His obedience and self-emptying as was His humiliation, yet always and everywhere He is Jehovah's equal. The

close of Mark characteristically announces: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by signs that followed. Amen" (R. V.). After the ascension, this Gospel reminds us that Christ, although now in the highest glory, is still the worker, associating Himself with His toiling servants on the earth.

A brief outline of the events the night of the arrest, "the seven words from the cross," and the resurrection, is here appended. The order followed is mainly that of Westcott:

A. Night of Arrest.

Last Supper	6.00 P. M.
Agony	11.00 P. M.
Betrayal	Midnight.
Led to High Priest's House	1.00 A. M.
Before Annas	2.00 A. M.
Before Caiaphas	3.00 A. M.
Condemned by Sanhedrin	4.30 A. M.
Before Pilate	5.00 A. M.
Before Herod	5.30 A. M.
Before Pilate again	6.00 A. M.
Sentence pronounced	6.30 (7.00) A. M.
Crucifixion	9.00 A. M.
Death	3.00 P. M.

B. The Seven Words from the Cross.

(1) Before the Darkness:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

“To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

“Woman, behold thy son! behold thy mother!”

(2) During the Darkness:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

(3) After Darkness:

“I thirst.”

“It is finished.”

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

C. The Resurrection.

Rolling away of the stone Very early.

Mary Magdalene and other women 5.00 A. M.

(Approximate time).

Vision of angel and his message 5.30 A. M.

Vision of “two young men” 6.00 A. M.

Visit of Peter and John 6.30 A. M.

Vision of two angels to Mary Magdalene . . 6.30 A. M.

The Lord revealed to Mary 7.00 A. M.

The Lord revealed to other women . . . 7 to 8 A. M.

The Lord revealed to the two (Emmaus) . 4 to 6 P. M.

The Lord revealed to Peter after 4 P. M.

The Lord revealed to the Eleven 8 P. M.

A remark or two concerning the hours given above may be indulged. Of course the times can be only approximately fixed. Some of them may be wrong, and it seems that some of the hours of the crucifixion are involved in deep obscurity. Reference is had specially to Mark xv. 25: “And it was the third hour; and they crucified him;” (John xix. 14): “And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour.” Mark’s “third hour” corresponds to our 9 A. M. If John follows the Hebrew method of computing the hours, then his “about the sixth hour” cor-

responds with (about) our noon. But if John follows the Roman method, as many very able interpreters think, then his "sixth" is also our 6 A. M. There appear to have been two companies or separate groups of women who started to the sepulcher; and three separate visions of angels—*e. g.*, the "young man" of Mark xvi. 5; Matthew xxviii. 5; "two men" (Luke xxiv. 4); "two angels" seen by Mary (John xx. 12).

It is noteworthy that Jesus' first utterance on the cross is the prayer, "Father, forgive them"—He employs the title Father, for matters had not yet come to the worst: at the close He uses it again, "Father, into thy hands," for matters had now passed their worst. But in the climax of His sufferings, in the mysterious, inexplicable hiding of the Father's face, He drops the title of Father, falls back on His own faith, on pure faith alone, and says, "My God, my God"—(Brown).

Summary.

In the Gospel by Mark Jesus is presented to us :

1. As a Preacher most tender and true.
2. As a Healer almighty.
3. As a Master over nature.
4. As a Master over the invisible world.
5. As a Servant most obedient and faithful.
6. As the Doer of God's perfect will.
7. As the Minister of Jehovah, our blessed Deliverer.

X

THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

THE author of the Third Gospel was Luke, "the beloved physician." Although the book of The Acts and this Gospel are from his pen, the information we have of him is very scant. Legend has been busy with his name, as it has with the names of other primitive Christians. We learn on pretty good authority (Eusebius and Jerome) that he was a native of Antioch, but whether a proselyte to the Jewish faith before his conversion to Christianity or not is unknown. It is related that he was one of the seventy sent forth by the Saviour, and one of the two with whom the risen Lord conversed in the memorable journey to Emmaus. But except that he is the only evangelist who records these facts there exists no ground for the tradition. Still less evidence is there for the legend that he was a painter, and that he was crucified on an olive tree in Greece. It is quite likely that he died in Greece, but whether as a martyr, or indeed under what circumstances, cannot now be ascertained.

Passing from uncertain tradition, it may be affirmed with confidence that the Third Gospel rep-

resents the glad tidings of salvation as proclaimed by the apostle Paul. Luke was the intimate friend and fellow-laborer of Paul (Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24). Significant is the exchange of the historical "they" in The Acts into the autobiographical "we" (xvi. 8; x. 11). From Troas to Philippi Luke was one of the apostle's companions. With him he journeyed to Jerusalem (Acts xxi.), and with him he seems to have spent much of the two years of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea. With him he sailed for Italy, whither the apostle was sent that his case might be adjudicated at Nero's bar. With him he remained during most of his long captivity at Rome. The last mention of Luke in the epistles occurs in 2 Tim. iv. 11, and very creditable to him it is—"only Luke is with me." While "all they of Asia" had turned away from him, this faithful friend stood by the aged prisoner, he alone. Paul's affection for the "beloved physician" was unfeigned and unwavering. If the "brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 8-18), was Luke, as many think, his prominence as a coworker with Paul is fully attested.

Ancient and trustworthy witnesses bear testimony to the fact that Luke's Gospel is to a large degree a reproduction of Paul's preaching. "Luke the companion of Paul put down in a

book the gospel preached by him (Paul)" (Irenaeus, about A. D. 180). "Luke's digest was usually ascribed to Paul" (Tertullian, about A. D. 200). The historian Eusebius (about A. D. 300) says that some were accustomed to refer Paul's words, "according to my gospel," to that of Luke.

There is a close connection between Paul and Luke as to the preëminence which each gives to the great doctrines of salvation. We shall see as we advance in this study that Luke presents to the world a Saviour fitted for the redemption of all, and offered to all. This is Paul's method likewise. To the Jew he preached Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah promised of old to the fathers—"out of the Scriptures opening and alleging that . . . this Jesus . . . is the Christ" (Acts xvii. 3). To the gentiles he proclaimed the gospel of a Redeemer for all men without exception or distinction. In such a gospel he gloried, in it he toiled with a devotion and an ardor that never flagged—a Redeemer suited to the needs of all, offered to all, Jew, Greek, Roman, barbarian, philosopher and dullard, noble and slave. Such a Saviour, divine-human, for all, it is the main purpose of Luke to reveal.

The motive for its composition is stated (i. 1-4). The writings to which Luke refers were not Matthew and Mark, but accounts of the Lord

Jesus then in circulation among the Christians. A most wonderful life had just closed by a tragic death and glorious resurrection. Extraordinary events filled the thoughts of men. "Many had taken in hand" to tell the marvelous story. Such writings were floating about. They may have been more or less helpful to readers: we have no means of knowing, for they are totally lost. But they were not satisfactory. They did not tell all that should be told, or they did not tell it accurately. They lacked an essential element, they were not inspired of the Spirit of God. Accordingly, Luke set himself to the task of writing "the certainty" of those things "most surely believed among us." Very noteworthy is the clause in this introduction, "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." The words are expressive of exact research, and of the faithfulness with which he narrates the facts. "Having traced the course of all things accurately from the first," is one rendering of the words (R. V.); "having followed up (or investigated) step by step all things from their source," is another. Luke's Gospel differs very materially, therefore, from those other writings; for, (1) he goes back farther than they did, "to the first;" (2) he presents the great theme in a consecutive form, "in order;" (3) his "sources" are trustworthy, for they were "eyewitnesses and

ministers of the word ;” (4) Luke’s account, therefore, is more complete, more accurate, and more authoritative. Luke certainly wishes his friend, Theophilus, and his readers generally, to understand that what he has written can be implicitly trusted. He gives no hint of the channel through which he received his “perfect knowledge,” save that it was from the “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word ;” he only assures us that his narrative of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely true and trustworthy.

Speculation about the “sources” is profitless. To those who, like the present writer, hold the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible, such speculation is arid, sometimes rationalistic. And yet the conjecture that Luke gathered his material for the composition of this matchless Gospel during the period of Paul’s imprisonment at Cæsarea may not be far wrong. Jerusalem was only a little more than fifty miles distant from Cæsarea, and easy of access. Luke could readily repair, if necessary, to the holy city and confer with those still living who had been in the Lord’s company. He could there find the genealogical records from which to trace the Lord’s human descent from Adam to Joseph and Mary. He had Paul as an inspired helper in his blessed work. The “eyewitnesses” were primarily the apostles who became also “ministers

of the word." They transmitted the sacred deposit of the truth found in the four gospels. Above all, he had the Spirit of the living God as his sure guide, and therefore we can confidently rely on Luke's accuracy and fidelity.

I. Some of Luke's distinctive features.

1. The Third Gospel has more of a strictly historical cast than the others. This is announced as one purpose of the writer; he traces the great history in an orderly manner "from the first." He goes back to the beginning, and tells us much of the family and the birth of John the Baptist, of Jesus' mother, and the birth of the Saviour and its attendant marvels. The first two chapters are singularly full of details. There is like fullness in succeeding chapters. And what is characteristic is that the history is carried on beyond the resurrection to the ascension. For Luke's Gospel is the history of redemption in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Luke pays careful attention to dates—a prime requisite in history. Thus, he notes that Herod was the king of Judæa when Gabriel the angel announced the birth of John to his astonished father; that six months thereafter the same heavenly messenger foretold Jesus' birth to Mary His mother; that Jesus was born at the time of the "first enrollment," when Cyrenius was governor of Syria (ii. 1-3); that John entered upon his

ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (iii. 1, 2). He notes the circumcision of the child (ii. 21); His presentation in the temple (ii. 22); His age of twelve when found in the temple disputing with the doctors (ii. 42); and His age of "about thirty" when He began His public ministry.

3. The Third Gospel contains various references to the institutions, customs, geography, and history of Judæa, and the Jewish people at the time of the advent. And these references are so minute and particular that it would be most difficult, if not impossible, for any but a contemporary to maintain the definiteness and general accuracy of statement that we here find on almost every page.

4. The introduction of inspired songs is another peculiarity of Luke. We read of the salutation of Elisabeth when Mary visited her (i. 42-45); the song of the virgin mother (i. 46-55); of Zeechariah when speech was restored to him (i. 68-79); the rhythmical prayer of the aged Simeon (ii. 29-32). At the Saviour's birth a chorus of angelic song sweeps through the midnight sky (ii. 13, 14), and the shepherds glorify and praise God (ii. 20). How much of thanksgiving and of joy is found in this Gospel! It begins with songs of praise; it ends with gladness and rejoicing on the part of dis-

ciples. In Mark we find much of Christ's sorrows in His ministry, but little of joy; here there is sorrow likewise, but more of joy.

5. There are here details concerning the Saviour that stamp this Gospel with a peculiarity of its own. Only some of these details are noted. One is the prolonged journey toward Jerusalem related in chapters ix. 51–xix. 27, a section passed over almost in silence by the other gospels; and yet it is one filled with some of the most remarkable events in the Lord's ministry. Another, the record of the sinful woman at Jesus' feet in Simon's house (vii. 35–50); His tears over impenitent Jerusalem (xix. 41–44)¹; His prayer for Peter in the extremity of his danger (xxii. 31); His "look" upon Peter after the third denial (xxii. 61); His agony and bloody sweat in the garden of sorrow (xxii. 44). Of His seven utterances on the cross three are found in Luke—viz., the prayer for His murderers; the promise to the dying malefactor; and the prayer to the Father. His appearing to the two on the way to Emmaus is peculiar to Luke (xxiv. 13–35). So also His parting blessing to the disciples at His ascension (xxiv. 50–53).

¹ The word Luke uses is a strong one, meaning to *weep audibly*. At the grave of Lazarus He wept (John xi. 35), but it was silent tears He shed; here He *wept aloud*, no doubt sobbed aloud, in His profound grief. He is genuinely human, tender, pitiful even to tears.

These are some of the details of this Gospel. Others will be noticed as this study proceeds.

II. Analysis.

1. Introduction, i. 1-4.

2. The Nativity, i. 5-ii.

- (1) Announcement of the Forerunner, i. 5-25.
- (2) Announcement of the Saviour, i. 26-38.
- (3) Joy of Elisabeth and Mary, i. 39-56.
- (4) Birth of John, i. 57-80.
- (5) Birth of the Saviour, ii. 1-7.
- (6) Songs of Thanksgiving, ii. 8-38.
- (7) Childhood and Growth of Jesus, ii. 39-52.

3. Preparation for the Ministry, iii.-iv. 13.

- (1) Preaching of John, iii. 1-20.
- (2) Baptism of Jesus, iii. 21, 22.
- (3) Genealogy, iii. 23-38.
- (4) Jesus' Trial and Victory, iv. 1-13.

4. Early Ministry in Galilee, iv. 14-vii.

- (1) First Circuit, Sermon at Nazareth, iv. 14-31.
- (2) Many Miracles wrought, iv. 32-v. 26.
- (3) Call of Levi, Discourses, Call of Apostles, v. 27-vi. 16.
- (4) Sermon in the Plain, vi. 17-49.
- (5) Miracles, Discourse on John, on Forgiveness, vii.

5. Later Ministry in Galilee, and Journey Northward, viii.-ix. 50.

- (1) The first Parable, viii. 1–18.
- (2) His Mother's visit, viii. 19–21.
- (3) Miracles—Demoniac of Gadara, Bloody Issue, Jairus' daughter, viii. 22–56.
- (4) Mission of the Twelve, and succeeding Events, ix. 1–17.
- (5) At Cæsarea Philippi, prediction of His death, ix. 18–27.
- (6) Transfiguration, prediction of His death, ix. 28–45.
- (7) Dispute as to the greatest, ix. 46–50.

6. Closing Ministry, commonly called the Peraean Ministry, ix. 51–xix. 28.

- (1) Spirit of true Discipleship, ix. 51–62.
- (2) Mission of the Seventy, x. 1–24.
- (3) A Lawyer; Mary and Martha, x. 25–41.
- (4) Discourse on Prayer, xi. 1–13.
- (5) Discourses touching Pharisaism, xi. 14–12.
- (6) Teachings; Parables; Miracles, xiii. 18–30.
- (7) Final Stage of the Journey to Jerusalem, xiii. 31–xviii. 28.

7. Last Days of the Saviour, xix. 29–xxii. 46.

- (1) In the City, and at the Temple, xix. 29–48.
- (2) A day of Questions, xx.
- (3) The Olivet Prophecy, xxi.
- (4) The Last Supper, xxii. 1–38.

(5) The Garden of Sorrow, xxii. 39-46.

8. The Arrest, Trial, Crucifixion, and Burial, xxii. 47-xxiii.

9. The Resurrection and Ascension, xxiv.

A brief remark on section 6 of the above analysis may not be out of place. It is the section entitled ordinarily, "The Peraean Ministry"—viz., chapters ix. 51-xix. 28. It is generally believed that the section in question covers several months of the closing ministry of our Lord. Luke's narrative here stands almost alone; Matthew and Mark touch it but slightly. Does Luke in the section describe three distinct journeys to Jerusalem, or only one journey which he breaks into three stages or parts? Let the following texts be noted: "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (ix. 51). "And he went . . . journeying toward Jerusalem" (xiii. 22). "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem" (xvii. 11). The last mention is found in xix. 28, which, obviously, must be placed at the end of the whole journey or journeys. It is quite possible to view the whole section as one journey which Luke breaks into three stages, as marked by the texts cited above. It is just as probable that he here weaves three distinct journeys into one continuous narrative. This last view is supported by the following arrangement of the journeys (Wieseler; C. W. Hodge):

- (1) To Feast of Tabernacles, Luke ix. 51 ; cp. John vii. 10.
- (2) To Bethany, Luke xiii. 22 ; cp. John xi. 1.
- (3) To Passover, Luke xvii. 11 ; xix. 28 ; cp. John xi. 55.

It is claimed that the narrative in John fits into the various breaks that are noted in Luke. At any rate, whether Luke gives three distinct journeys or one divided into three stages, we may be certain this entire section stretches over considerable time, and is filled with details that are largely passed over in silence by the gospels of Matthew and Mark.

III. Design of Luke. It is mainly to set forth the perfections of the Son of man as the Friend and Redeemer of men, the Saviour of all that believe and receive Him. In Matthew, Jesus meets the Jew as the Messiah, the promised Deliverer. In Mark He meets the needy world as the divine Minister to that need. In Luke He meets the lost and ruined of our race as its Almighty Saviour. Here Jesus is presented as the Son of man, the Friend of universal man. Undoubtedly He is here also set forth as the Messiah, the Minister of Jehovah, and the Son of God. His great offices of prophet, priest, and king, the dignity of His person and His majestic relations with God the Father are all in Luke as they are in the other gospels. But Luke's chief

design is to reveal Christ as a man, with all the sympathies, feelings, and growing powers of a man—as a Saviour, therefore, suited to all, and sent to all.

Messiah was to be a king, to have a kingdom and loyal subjects. Matthew deals mainly with this feature of the Lord's manifold relations. Furthermore, Christ was to be the Minister of God, and perfectly accomplish the divine will on the earth. It was the main purpose of Mark to exhibit Him to us in this most important aspect of His blessed work. He is the second man, the Lord of glory, who fulfills all God's law and glorifies Him perfectly in the world.

But Messiah was to fill another office, perform another function, different somewhat from those just mentioned, and no less essential to the execution of God's purposes of grace and mercy toward men. In a very special sense Messiah was to be the Redeemer of His people. He was to discharge in full the awful debt they had incurred, and to secure their complete deliverance. Their ransom was to be effected by the payment of every obligation to the last farthing. This and much more the Redeemer must accomplish to be true to His supreme function.

The terms, Redeemer, Redeem, Redemption, are of frequent use in the Scriptures. Jehovah Himself is called Redeemer again and again (*e.g.*

Ps. xix. 14; Isa. xlivi. 14; xliv. 6). But what is meant by this term? Lev. xxv. opens the doctrine of the redeemer. The law defines the person of the redeemer. He must be a near relative, a kinsman of him for whom he acts (Lev. xxv. 25). No one else could act in that capacity. Thus we see in the Book of Ruth that Boaz could redeem the alienated inheritance of Naomi because he was near of kin to her husband (ii. 1; iii. 12). So also Jeremiah had the legal right to buy the property of Hanameel, for the right of redemption was his, because he was closely related to the owner (Jer. xxxii. 6-8). This was the first qualification one was to have in order to be a redeemer—his blood-relationship with him for whom he must act. The word employed to designate the office of Redeemer indicates this: *Goel*, a kinsman-redeemer.

His office is next defined in the chapter. It is threefold: (1) He redeems the inheritance (Lev. xxv. 25); (2) He redeems the person (verses 47-50); (3) He executes judgment on the enemies and oppressors of him for whom he acts. This feature of the kinsman-redeemer appears in such passages as Num. xxxv. 19-21; Deut. xix. 12, where the words, "avenger of blood," stand for the *Goel*, the redeemer near of kin. The redemption of the person is seen in the remarkable words of Job (xix. 25-27), wherein he

expresses his assured confidence that his Kinsman-Redeemer shall yet appear on earth, and that He will vindicate him and his righteous cause by bringing deliverance and resurrection.

Luke's object is mainly to reveal the redemption wrought by our glorious Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here for the first time in the New Testament do we meet with the word redemption, "for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people" (i. 68, R. V.). Anna "spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (ii. 38). The disheartened disciples on the memorable journey to Emmaus said to the stranger who had joined them, "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel" (xxiv. 21). Christ Himself condenses in this Gospel His whole mission into one most pregnant sentence, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (xix. 10), a sentence that discloses at once the lost condition of men, the person and the mission of Him whose noble aim it is to redeem. At His birth the angel announced to the wondering shepherds: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (ii. 10, 11). This angelic greeting is the very heart of Luke's Gospel.

Very suggestive are the words in the ancient law of Israel, "If thy brother be waxen poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next to him come, and shall redeem that which his brother sold" (Lev. xxv. 25). There must be willingness on the part of the kinsman to undertake for the distressed brother, and power to execute what he undertakes. That divinely appointed provision was a dim shadow of what our great Kinsman-Redeemer would in due time accomplish for all His people. He, too, would both voluntarily and effectively undertake for them, would redeem their persons, their lost inheritance, and at length execute vengeance on their foes—sickness, death, the grave, and Satan. And so we read, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion" (Isa. lix. 20). And He will come willingly, gladly, for it is thus announced by Himself, "Lo ! I come : I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8; cp. Heb. x. 7-10).

Let us see how this precious office of the Kinsman-Redeemer is worked out by our evangelist.

1. The Incarnation. If Jehovah Himself is to be the Redeemer of men He must assume their nature, must in a true and proper sense be identified with them. An Egyptian, a Syrian, a Babylonian never could have been the deliverer

of an Israelite, for he lacked the first essential qualification—viz., blood-relationship. The Redeemer must be “near of kin.” In His divine personality our Lord had the power, but not the absolute right to redeem. He needed to become our “kinsman” in order to possess the right to offer the price of redemption. Accordingly, He took our very nature, was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. viii. 3); became bone of our bone and flesh (Eph. v. 30). “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also Himself likewise took part of the same;.... Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. ii. 14, 17). By thus becoming related to us, He has the right, and will enforce it, of redeeming the persons of His believing people, and their forfeited heritage as well.

This vital truth Luke never loses sight of throughout his entire narrative. He who is here presented to us is a true man, possessing a perfect and penetrating community of nature and feeling with the lot of human kind. The nature which He assumed was our nature, sin and sinful propensities only excepted. Accordingly, Luke is concerned above all the other gospels with the

facts and events of His incarnation (chapters i., ii.). Here we have the fullest communications of Jesus' birth, childhood, growth, domestic and social life. Here alone do we learn something of that mystery of mysteries, the Immaculate Conception of the Son of Mary (i. 30-35). It is but a glance that is vouchsafed us, a hint profound, inscrutable, unfathomable ; but enough to enable us to see that the ancient predictions of the marvel that by woman alone should the promised Deliverer appear in the world (Gen. iii. 15 ; Isa. vii. 14), had literal fulfillment in the birth of Jesus by the virgin chosen of God. It is worthy of note that Luke alone records the glad reception of the Redeemer by the saints living at the time of His advent. Elisabeth greets her kinswoman, Mary, with the joyful words : "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me ?" (i. 42, 43). Zacharias sings with overflowing joy : "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began : that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ; to perform the mercy promised to our

fathers, and to remember his holy covenant ; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham" (i. 68-73). And Simeon, with the child in his aged arms, chants with exquisite tenderness and contentment : "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ; a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (ii. 29-32). Nor is the voice of the virgin mother herself silent in these hours of happy exultation, for in that tuneful inspiration which men call the "Magnificat," she says : "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour . . . He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy ; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever" (i. 46-55).

We learn from this Gospel that the humanity of Jesus was perfectly natural in its development. We read : "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon him" (ii. 40, 52). There was nothing of unnatural progress in Him. All was orderly increase. No unhealthy precocity marked the holiest of infancies. His wisdom kept pace with His years. He was a child first, and afterwards a man ; not a man in child's years. As a child He was subject to Joseph and Mary (ii. 51),

toiled with His own hands, was often covered with the dust and shavings of His trade (iv. 22; cp. Mark vi. 3). Nor do these notices of His humanity terminate with His birth and childhood; they are carried through His entire career. Here we read that "He rejoiced in spirit," that "He wept over the city," of His "kneeling down in prayer," and of the angel that strengthened Him. Here only we learn that "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" and with His latest breath He cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And after the resurrection here only we are told He verified the reality of His resurrection body by "sitting at meat with them," by taking "a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb," and eating it "before them;" by bidding them "handle" Him, and "see," "for," said He, and it is the only place where the fact is recorded, "it is I myself" . . . "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." All is strikingly human.

Nothing can be more obvious than that Luke demonstrates beyond all peradventure that the Son of God became incorporate with our kind, assumed our nature in union with Himself. And this He did in order to secure for us the salvation we so greatly need. In other words, the Saviour

becomes our Kinsman-Redeemer by taking to Himself "a true body and a reasonable soul."

2. Luke's genealogy shows that the Redeemer is near of kin to all men, gentile and Jew alike (iii. 23-38). Matthew's genealogy *descends* from Abraham to Jesus, in accordance with his main purpose; for all the promises and predictions made to Abraham and David (Matt. i. 1) must find their accomplishment in the Lord Jesus. Luke's genealogy *ascends* from Jesus to Adam, in accordance with the chief design of the Spirit here—viz., to show the close relationship of the Redeemer with mankind-sinners. In this Gospel the two heads of the race stand at the ends of humanity's line—Jesus the head of the redeemed humanity; Adam, the head of the lost race. The one fallen, sinful, transmitting sin and death to all his posterity; the other bringing redemption to as many as receive it.

Let us not glance at this marvelous family tree as though it were a dead, a withered tree. All down the uncounted centuries that lie between the two heads—Jesus and Adam—God saw progress toward the fulfillment of His promise and purpose in the man Christ Jesus, who as the Kinsman-Redeemer was to endure what the first man Adam by his fall had wrought.

Whose genealogy is here traced? Apparently Joseph's (iii. 23). Have we then in Matthew

and Luke two genealogies of Joseph? If so, how can the differences of names between David and Joseph be accounted for? For example, Matthew says that Jacob was Joseph's father, whereas Luke makes Heli his father. Various explanations are offered, not one of which is satisfactory on the theory of both lists being those of Joseph. Perhaps the view attended with the least difficulties is that Matthew gives the legal descent of the Saviour through the royal line to which Joseph belonged; Luke His lineal descent through Mary. The terms of the covenant made with David and his house involve the necessity of Messiah's being David's son and heir (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 19-32; exxxii. 11). In Rom. i. 3, Paul writes that Christ "was made (born) of the seed of David according to the flesh." Peter likewise testifies that Messiah was to be of the "fruit of his [David's] loins" (Acts ii. 30, 31; cp. Acts xiii. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 8, etc.). These passages plainly require that Messiah must be the lineal descendant of David. No other can by any possibility satisfy these explicit terms. But Joseph, Mary's husband, was not Jesus' father, save in the legal sense. But the promised Deliverer must be of David's "seed according to the flesh"—must be a literal flesh and blood descendant. Therefore, His mother, Mary, must have been a member of David's house as

well as Joseph.¹ So the angel promised, “and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke i. 32).

Since Luke deals mainly with the Lord’s character as Son of man, the Kinsman-Redeemer, it seems fitting that he should record His real genealogy. Mary was David’s offspring through Nathan, David’s son. But a female could not be inscribed in a Jewish register. Heli was her father according to the Talmud (Pul. Comm. in loe.). Joseph was the natural son of Jacob, Mary the natural daughter of Heli; when married, Joseph would of necessity be named in the genealogy; hence, we have in Luke, “Joseph of Heli” (iii. 23) (*i. e.*, Son-in law).²

In his genealogy, Luke introduces the Redeemer to the world. He traces His descent up to Adam, the father of the human family, thus

¹ Luke i. 36 offers no real difficulty. Elisabeth was of the tribe of Levi, and Mary’s kinswoman. But this does not prove that Mary likewise was of that tribe. Levites intermarried with other tribes. Aaron himself married into Jndah. (See Alf. “Speakers,” Pulpit, and other Commentaries.)

² The Greek article is omitted before Joseph, and is found connected with every other name in Luke’s list. This remarkable fact indicates, first, that Joseph was not Jesus’ father; second, that this is not Joseph’s genealogy, but Heli’s, his father-in-law’s. Two lines of descent from David unite in Christ—the royal, through Solomon and Joseph; the natural, through Nathan, Heli, and Mary.

linking Him with the whole race. Christ, therefore, can justly be presented as a Saviour to all men, since He is related to all. Though born a Jew according to the flesh, the son of Abraham and of David, He is nevertheless the son of Adam, the son of man, the genuine offspring of humanity.

Very significant is Luke's last word in the pedigree, "Adam which was the son of God." Scripture knows nothing of the modern hypothesis of evolution as applied to the origin of man. The inspired Luke writes, "Adam was the son of God," and his words invest the origin of our race with a majesty and dignity utterly denied it by the scientific theories and speculations now so common. God's way is to tell us we were made in His image and likeness; that we have fallen through sin; that we may recover all we have lost and far more through Christ. Man's way is to exalt humanity as it now is, and then to degrade it to a level with the brutes in its origin. True are the words of Prof. Godet, "Unless the image of God had been stamped upon man, the Incarnation would have been impossible." True also the deep words of Bengel, "All things are of God through Christ; and all things are brought back through Christ to God."

3. The inscription indicates something of the

Spirit's design in this Scripture. It is addressed to Theophilus (*Dear to God*, the name signifies), a man of rank, as the title "most excellent" shows (ep. Acts xxiii. 26 ; xxiv. 3 ; xxvi. 25). But better, he was a fellow-Christian with Luke, and he is addressed more especially that he might "know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed" (i. 4). Probably he was a gentile, as was Luke himself. This is the only Gospel addressed to a man. The Acts is likewise inscribed to the same person. Why should the Spirit of God thus affix the name of Theophilus in the opening of the glad tidings He has to present to the children of men ? It is characteristic and most beautiful in its way. Jesus is here presented as the friend of universal man, Himself also a man who comes into all the circumstances of our humanity. He is not here so much the Messiah, though, of course, that He is ; nor the Servant of Jehovah, though that great office He here fulfills no less than in Mark. Nor is He set forth before us here preëminently as the Son of God, though that likewise He most certainly is. Here He is the man, claiming relationship with every kind of men. It is fitting that Luke should address his Gospel to a gentile, an alien as the Jew believed.

4. The messages of both John and Jesus in opening their respective ministries clearly indi-

cate Luke's design. John announced as the burden of his mission : "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough way shall be made smooth" (iii. 4, 5). The imagery seems to be taken from military operations. John's work was like that of the pioneers who go before the march of the king. It was his to remove obstructions, to overthrow barriers, to level up depressions, and to level down heights. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (verse 6). Luke alone introduces these precious words, for he is bringing out the blessedness and universality of Christ's redemptive work.

In the first recorded sermon of Jesus in this Gospel we read : "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (iv. 18, 19). He selected a passage that announces the sublime object of His whole mission. He is commissioned and sent of God, and divinely qualified for His work. The characteristic features of

His mission are set forth ; He is to gladden the poor with the good tidings, to comfort, and to deliver. How strikingly descriptive of the offices of the Kinsman-Redeemer it is. “The acceptable year” is an allusion to Israel’s great Jubilee year (Lev. xxv. 10), the year of universal release both of person and property. Then, too, He stops short in the quotation from Isaiah ; He will not read, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” for that part of His work is to be executed hereafter, not now.

5. The universality of His compassions is here brought to view. In Luke, Christ is both human and humane. He has peculiar affection for *little children*. The other evangelists also mention this. But Luke commonly adduces additional circumstances that discover the Lord’s gentleness and tenderness. Those that are brought to Him are called “infants” (xviii. 15), and it is the only place in the gospels where the epithet is employed in such connection : “babes” is its real meaning ; twice it is used of the child Jesus (ii. 12, 16), the babe in “swaddling clothes,” the babe “lying in a manger”—how strikingly human it all is ! Here we are told that Jairus’ daughter was an “only daughter,” and “about twelve years of age.” So, too, the widow of Nain’s son was “the only son of his mother.” Let it be observed that the details of

the Saviour's childhood and youth found so largely in Luke not only establish His incarnation, but they seem to be designed to reveal Him as adapted to sympathize with little children, and to help them in all their distresses, since He Himself was a child, and had experience of all that child-life is. "They brought unto Him their babes" "that He should touch them." He is no less compassionate and tender now, though glorified. He still "can be touched," for He still is our Kinsman-Redeemer.

In this Gospel *Woman* is specially honored. At His birth, during His ministry, at the crucifixion, after His resurrection, woman's place in Luke is very prominent. Those that ministered to Him out of their substance are here mentioned by name (viii. 2, 3). Much of what we know of His mother and all we know of Elisabeth we derive from Luke. Anna the widow of four-score at the temple, the widow of Nain, the woman bound by Satan's malign influence for eighteen years, Martha's busy and Mary's quiet life, the woman that was a sinner, the widows of Israel in the days of Elisha, the importunate widow of the parable—how full this Gospel is of women! And how full and blessed is the Lord's sympathy and graciousness toward them whom men had despised and degraded! Well might His mother Mary sing in joyful praise, "He hath

put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree" (i. 52), for He is the Redeemer who makes good His kinship with the oppressed and the despised.

The outcast and forsaken are in Luke objects of Christ's special regard. He is seen associating with publicans, sinners, the fallen, the ostracized from human society, not participating in their sins and evil ways, but purifying and lifting them out of their degradation and defilement. To the sinful woman who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, He said, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (vii. 44-50). The words, "go in peace," are strong and beautiful—go into peace, they might be rendered. From that moment onward her home was to be peace; let her enter it and abide there. To Zacheus and his household He brought salvation (xix. 1-9). The ten lepers (xvii. 12-19), Lazarus the beggar (xvi. 20-22), the good Samaritan (x. 30-37), the penitent dying thief (xxiii. 40-43), are examples of this blessed feature of His ministry. In chapter xv. 2, we read, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." This is the "gospel according to the Pharisees." They said it in bitterness and scorn. But unwittingly they spoke the very truth. Jesus Christ does actually do as these fault-finders alleged. Singularly

vivid is the word translated “receiveth.” Elsewhere it is thus rendered, “waiting for” (ii. 25); “looked for” (ii. 38). We might almost read it “This man looketh out for sinners, and eateth with them.” He not only receives; He seeks, and He welcomes.

6. Christ’s dependence on God is faithfully recorded in this Gospel. Reference is had to His prayers and supplications. In all the crises of His earthly life, in the exigencies which came upon Him in the prosecution of His redeeming work, He uniformly turned to God for guidance and help. It is from the Third Gospel we learn that He was praying when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him at His baptism (iii. 21). It is from the same source we learn that His choice of the twelve was made after a night spent in prayer (vi. 12–16). Here only are we told that it was at a time when He was engaged in prayer that Peter confessed Him as the Christ of God (ix. 18–20). Here only are we told that His transfiguration occurred when He was praying (ix. 28, 29). Here only are we told that when He gave the disciples a pattern of prayer in what is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer, He had just before given them a pattern of prayer in His own example (xi. 1). Here only are we told of His prayer for Peter and the others that, in the awful hour of trial when

Satan would sift them as wheat, Peter's faith might not fail (xxii. 31, 32); of His repeated prayers, and His praying more earnestly in His agony, and His sweating great drops of blood (xxii. 40-44); of His prayers on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (xxiii. 34, 46).

Nor is it only in these records of His own personal prayers that this Gospel evinces the spirit of prayer by which He was animated and possessed; it records His instructions on prayer, its duty and character, more fully than any of the other gospels. Witness the parables of the friend at midnight (xi. 5-13), the importunate widow (xviii. 1-8), the Pharisee and publican (xviii. 9-14). The duty of thanksgiving also for blessings received He urges. Witness His striking commendation of the man cured by Him of the leprosy who "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God," giving Jesus "thanks." "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" (xvii. 12-19). Luke's Gospel might well be called the Gospel of prayer and thanksgiving. As such it is the Gospel of humanity, for it reveals Him who is our kinsman claiming kindred with us all, who enters into all that attaches to

our condition, into our needs and weaknesses, our sorrows and afflictions, our hunger and danger; for He is the Son of man, the genuine offspring of our race.

Here the Lord Jesus is set forth as a worshiper of God. In chapter iv. 16 occurs an expression of profound suggestiveness: "And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day." "As His custom was." It was His habitual practice. Children at the age of five years were admitted into the synagogue, and at thirteen attendance there was a part of the legal life of the Jew. Jesus frequented the place of worship, was Himself a worshiper, and took part in the service. If any ever had a right to absent himself, it was He. He could learn nothing from those who expounded the word of God, and they could teach Him nothing. But the Sabbath was God's ordinance, and worship a divine appointment. On both He will put honor. Therefore He kept rank with those who sought the Lord. He would gladly say: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." For He identified Himself with the people of God, a man among men.

7. Christ's conflicts with adversaries and His victories over them is another feature of Luke. Reference is had more particularly to His victories over Satan, disease, and death. In the

other gospels He is seen in conflict with the foes of His people, but in Luke it is made prominent. Here we learn that His temptation in the wilderness lasted during the whole period of His fast (iv. 1, 2). At the close of the forty days He was assaulted by the devil with the three sharp trials which are recorded. But prior to these He passed through such struggles as never fall to the lot of a mere human being. We can form no conception of the nature or the object of that mysterious and fierce encounter. Conjecture is worse than idle. Far out into a region of trial where our experience finds no place, our blessed Master met the strong and subtle adversary of our souls, and gloriously defeated him.

Let it be noted that in this scene there is a disclosure of Satan's authority which is not mentioned by Matthew or Mark. The devil said to the Lord: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." It was neither an empty boast nor an entire falsehood. Enormous power is ascribed to Satan in the Scriptures. Thrice the Saviour calls him "The prince of this world" (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; x. 11). Paul describes him as "the god of this world [or age]," and as "the prince of the power of the air" (2 Cor. iv. 4, Eph. ii. 2). "And the dragon gave him [the beast] his power,

and his throne, and great authority" (Rev. xiii. 2). His sway is as real as it is terrible. Un-godly men are righteously sold under it. This bad preëminence of the adversary was gained over men through the temptation and fall of the first human pair. "The whole world lieth in the evil one" is John's most solemn statement (1 John v. 19, R. V.). That was its condition in John's day; it is its state now; it lies in the lap of the devil! But Christ's victory over the foul tempter is the victory of His people likewise. "And the devil left him for a season"—until an opportunity. Defeated in the conflict, Satan, however, was not wholly overthrown. When the opportunity arises he will return to the assault, but only to suffer a most crushing defeat, even expulsion from the world, and eternal torture in the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10). Accordingly, Jesus said to the seventy: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 18). The words are prophetic. The day swiftly draws near when Christ will bind the strong one, despoil him of his possessions, and fling him bound into the bottomless pit (Rev. xx. 1-3). What is all this but our glorious Kinsman-Redeemer executing vengeance on the savage enemy of His people, the devil?

In Luke we have the earnest and pledge of our Lord's blessed work in the redemption and

final deliverance of His own from every form of Satan's oppression. Thus He releases the woman whom Satan had bound for eighteen years (xiii. 16). He prays for those whom Satan had asked for that he might sift them as wheat (xxii. 31). He said to His pitiless judges : "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (xxii. 53). The pronoun "your" is very emphatic. Through these wretched men Satan was working his will, his ferocious hatred against the Son of God. But Christ's "hour" will ere long sound out, and then the devil, and death, and Hades, the horrible triad, will find their doom in the lake of fire, "which is the second death" (Rev. xx. 10, 14). Thus will He take vengeance on His and our foes !

And then Luke furnishes the strongest possible evidence of the ultimate redemption of our bodies. This precious truth rests on the mighty fact of the Lord's resurrection. It is beautiful and very significant that the Third Gospel gives us the most ample proof of the identity of the Saviour's resurrection body. We are told that He showed them His hands and His feet, he invited them to handle Him, and see that it was His very self ; He ate before them ; He assured them that, unlike a spirit, He had flesh and bones (xxiv. 39-44). Three of our most trustworthy senses, sight, hearing, and touch, were appealed to by the risen

Saviour that His identity might be fully attested by His disciples.

Now why does the Spirit of God in this Gospel enter into such detail? summon such witnesses? Why does He add certainty to assurance? For two reasons: First, to establish the *fact* of Christ's resurrection beyond all question or cavil. Second, to gladden our hearts with the certainty of our own resurrection in immortal glory. Christ's resurrection is the pledge and sample of ours. He has redeemed our whole selves, and by and by our bodies shall be conformed to the likeness of His body of glory (Phil. iii. 20, 21). And so Luke describes Christ's ascension, with outstretched hands in blessing, the token and the promise that He will in due time complete His blessed work in our full redemption.

8. The miracles of Luke attest the truth we have been contemplating. There are twenty-one recorded by this evangelist, of which six are peculiar to his narrative. They are: The first draught of fishes (v. 4-10); the widow of Nain's son raised to life (vii. 11-16); the woman infirm for eighteen years (xiii. 10-17); a case of dropsy (xiv. 2-5); the ten lepers cured (xvii. 12-19); Malchus' ear restored (xxii. 51). In each of these mighty works there is proof of His compassion and His power. Even in those miracles

which are common to the other gospels there are touches that exhibit the Lord's humanity and tenderness as Redeemer and Friend. Thus, when He met the funeral procession at the gate of Nain, and saw the helpless desolation of the widowed mother, "he had compassion on her and said unto her, Weep not." It is beautifully added by Luke, "And he gave him to his mother" (R. V.). The great Kinsman restores what was lost, the only heritage of the weeping mother. No wonder the people "glorified God, saying . . . God hath visited his people." So, too, when He had cast out the unclean spirit from the "only child" of his father, we read, He "gave him back to his father" (ix. 42, R. V.). Restoration again of what was lost. As we saw, this is one part of the functions of the Kinsman-Redeemer, and blessedly does our *Goel* fulfill it.

9. The parables of Luke witness to the same truth. Of these fifteen are found only in this Gospel. One needs only to name them to have it made altogether clear that through them shine the grace and saving power of the Redeemer. They are: The two debtors (vii. 41-43); good Samaritan (x. 30-37); friend at midnight (xi. 5-8); rich fool (xii. 16-21); barren fig tree (xiii. 6-9); great supper (xiv. 16-24); lost sheep (xv. 3-7); lost coin (xv. 8-10); lost son (xv. 11-32); unjust steward (xvi. 1-8); rich man and Lazarus

(xvi. 19-31); unprofitable servants (xvii. 7-9); unjust judge (xviii. 1-8); Pharisee and publican (xviii. 9-14); ten pounds (xix. 11-27).

These fifteen matchless discourses teach many and varied lessons. They are fitted to different classes of men, and to every kind of circumstance and condition of life. But preëminently do they reveal the Lord Jesus as the Friend and Brother of universal man, and that His grace and love lead Him to seek and save the lost. They exhibit Him also as the Arbiter and Judge of men, who will reward every one according as his works shall be. They set Him forth likewise in His gracious character of Redeemer who restores to men the precious things they have dispossed away by their sins and follies. Witness the three recorded in the fifteenth chapter. One of the parables, that of the rich man and Lazarus, teaches, and was intended to teach, the righteous adjustments in the other life of the strange inequalities that are so often found in this. Let us glance at it for a moment. Death, that crowns or crushes all human hopes, removes these two men. Jesus follows them into the other world, describes their state. It is common to call this parable an allegory, a fiction, designed to point a grave moral lesson for the present life. Let those who thus read ponder well this dilemma : (1) Either Christ as Son of God knew that

other life perfectly ; but instead of telling us the exact truth about it choose to weave together for practical ends this striking but purely fictitious story. If He did, then what becomes of His august title, the Truth ? (John xiv. 6). (2) Or if He did not know any more of that other life than do we, and yet undertook to relate the experiences of these two men after death, then, still, what becomes of His honesty and His Deity ? We receive this strange narrative as literally and historically true, dressed as it is in the speech of our common life and experience, and believe that its solemn lesson is that the Redeemer, our blessed Kinsman, warns, exhorts, instructs, but yet fixes ultimately the final destiny of men—of those who trust Him, and of those also who refuse Him and choose the world's wealth and pleasure instead of Him and His glory.

10. In his record of the closing scenes of the Lord's earthly sojourn Luke still keeps in view his main theme—Jesus is the Kinsman-Redeemer.

In chapter xxii. 43, 44 we read that in the profoundly mysterious struggle of the garden an angel from heaven strengthened Him, that “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” These two verses are wanting in many authorities, we are told. Their omission is due, it is believed, to a mistaken reverence, a timid anxiety to shield the

Saviour from the appearance of weakness and recoil which tend to sink Him to the level of a mere man. Heb. v. 7 confirms the statement, that He “who with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death was heard for his godly fear.” Luke is the only writer who tells us of the angel and the bloody sweat. And how deeply human it is! This is not the sacrificial offering, though essential to it. It is rather the presentation of the august Victim at the altar where life must be surrendered if men are ever to be saved. But how did the angel strengthen Him? We are not told. But we may reverently conjecture. One thousand years before He had said by the Spirit of prophecy, “Thou will not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psa. xvi. 9-11). Perhaps the angel reassured Him that His visit to the unseen world would be brief, that His body would shortly—how shortly!—leave the tomb, uninjured by its sojourn there; and hence He could say, and sing, “Therefore is my heart glad, and my glory rejoiceth.” He is truly man, but the conqueror of the grave.

The salvation of the dying robber further confirms the redeeming power of Jesus. Both the crucified men united at first to “revile” Him (Matt. xxvii. 44; Mark xv. 32). The word these gospels use is “reproached.” In the mad-

ness of horror and despair both joined the mockers of the patient Sufferer. But the impenitent one of the two, Luke tells us, "blasphemed" Christ, a much stronger term (Luke xxiii. 39, Greek). He addressed the Saviour in injurious and insulting language. The other quickly changed his mind about the sufferer. He recognized that He was innocent of every charge laid against Him, that He was more than He seemed to be, that He was the Lord indeed. For in such a moment faith may spring into being, and ripen with the swiftness of thought, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in Thy kingdom." "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (R. V.). It is an instance of the power and grace of the Redeemer to snatch a brand from the burning, a soul from the jaws of hell.

The Journey to Emmaus (xxiv. 13-35). Cleopas and his friend told their unrecognized companion that they had hoped that Jesus of Nazareth had been He who should have redeemed Israel. But instead, He was dead, had died three days before, died as one of three convicted felons on a cross, and with Him their hopes had died. The Redeemer crucified! What a crushing blow to all their hopes! Gently reproving their want of faith in all the prophets had spoken He added, "Behooved it not the Christ to suffer

these things, and to enter into his glory?" (R. V.) And beginning at Moses and, not at some but, all the prophets, He expounded unto them, not in some but, in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. He pointed out from the Old Testament the magnificent truth that instead of redemption having failed through His death, it was fully and eternally secured thereby. We may believe He began with the protevangelium (Gen. iii. 15), and went on through the covenants, the promises, the Messianic prophecies, and the inspired histories as to the person, the offices, and the glory of the Redeemer, till the hearts of the two disciples did burn within them as He opened to them the Scriptures.

Let us now gather up into a few points the main teaching of the Third Gospel, that some definite conception of its supreme aim may be formed. Luke sets forth the following fundamental truths :

1. The Real and Supernatural Incorporation of the Son of God with our race. As Son of man the Lord Jesus is "perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." As Son of man, He possesses a perfect and penetrating community of nature and of feeling with the lot of human kind. He displays a genuine manhood which could deem nothing human strange, and which could, and can still, be touched with

a feeling of our infirmities, for “he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. iv. 15).

2. Luke exalts Him as the representative, the ideal, the pattern man. It is in the Third Gospel especially that the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in the universality of His manhood. His is the human life that does justice to the most exalted idea of humanity. In Him humanity finds its unity; in Him, as Irenaeus said, “humanity finds its recapitulation.” Nothing local, transient, individualizing, national, or sectarian, dwarfs the proportions of His world-embracing character. He rises above the parentage, the blood, the narrow horizon which bounded, as it seemed, His human life, for he is the Catholic man in whose person distinctions of race, intervals of ages, types of civilization, and degrees of mental culture are as nothing. The comprehensiveness of His manhood is such that no age or nation can claim Him as exclusively their own: He belongs to all ages, is related to all men, whether they shiver amid the snows of the Arctic circle, or pant beneath the burning heat of the equator, for He is the Son of man, the Son of mankind, the genuine offspring of the race. Although He was born in Judæa, yet He is not a Jew; born in Asia, He is not an Oriental; much less is He a Greek, still less a Roman.

He is like the first Adam, but He is more than he, for He is also the Son of God. Higher than the highest, His infinite pity flows out to the lowliest, the most abandoned. He is no poet, yet a world of poesy slumbers in His matchless parables; no philosopher, yet wisdom discloses her divinest oracles by His lips; no conqueror, yet He wins the most stupendous victories the world has ever seen. It is not too much to say that as the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily, so in Him dwelt the fullness of humanity bodily.

3. Luke presents this divine man to the world as the mighty Redeemer. He possesses all the qualifications for such an office, and He perfectly fulfills its functions. For (1) He is "near of kin" to the whole race of man. Since He is the son of David and the son of Abraham, He is closely related to the one great branch of the human family, Israel. And since He is the son of Adam, a genuine member of the family of man, He is the kinsman of the other great branch, the gentile. The tuneful words of the angel to the shepherds are the very truth of God: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (ii. 10, 11). (2) He has proved and approved His kinship

throughout His entire earthly life and ministry. Every record, incident, action, miracle, and parable of the Lord Jesus in this Gospel illustrates and exalts the universality of His compassions, and "the wideness of His mercy." The Jew of pure extraction and the mongrel Samaritan, the Pharisee and publican, the respectable and the disreputable, the sinner and the self-righteous, are alike welcome to His presence. The door of redemption is opened wide, wide as the race. The Sun of Righteousness pours His healing beams on all; on the lowliest as on the loftiest, on gentile as on Jew, on the ragged prodigal as on his respectable brother. Luke's is the Gospel of grace, free and full, and suited to all mankind.

(3) He is abundantly able to redeem, for He is the Son of God Himself. The angel announced to His virgin mother that her Son was to be none other than the Son of God (i, 35). He who refuses the redemption now offered commits the gravest and greatest of crimes.

THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

12



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

WE now enter upon the study of one of the most profound and difficult books of Scripture, the Gospel according to John. It is profound because of the nature of its structure and plan, and because of its exceptional presentation of the great subject of all Scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is difficult, because of its terminology, because it is metaphysical and philosophical alike in its portraiture of the Son of God, of man, of faith and unbelief, of the divine life, of the world, and heaven. Not the least difficult feature in it is its remarkable clearness and simplicity, a simplicity and clearness which lie so obviously on the surface of the Gospel as to delude the casual reader with the notion that there are no depths in it. He, however, who will patiently and persistently read into it will discover that this feature is only apparent; the calmness and clearness arise not from the style so much as from the transparent thoughts of the writer. Beneath the surface, for those who have eyes to see, there are ever glancing out revelations and unfoldings of the person of Christ, of His inner

and mysterious being, of the life He lived, and of the doctrine He taught, which no other portion of the Bible discloses to us. On this account the book has been described thus: "The Fourth Gospel is the heart of Christ"; it is the "spiritual Gospel"; and John is called "the mystic of the four evangelists."

It may not be inappropriate to direct attention to the apostle's eminent fitness for the great task assigned him. Reference is had exclusively to his natural gifts, and to the opportunities he had of acquaintance with the events he narrates, not at all to his inspiration.

1. He was admitted to a peculiar intimacy with the Saviour. He was one of the chosen three who constituted the inner circle of the apostolic company. With his brother James and Peter, John was admitted to the death chamber in Jairus' house, from which all others were excluded save the father and mother of the child. With the two just named, he witnessed the Lord's transfiguration, and he beheld the awful agony of Gethsemane. He followed the Lord to judgment and to death, and from His dying lips received the charge of His mother. He was the "bosom disciple," and "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Of the three favored ones John's intimacy with the Lord was the closest. The distinguished privileges he enjoyed fitted him in

some measure for the august work committed to his hand,—viz., the recording of the ways and words of the Son of God.

2. His intellectual, or rather his spiritual, qualifications for the task were of the highest order. The ideal commonly formed of John is that he was tender, weak, almost effeminate in his mental and spiritual constitution. Artists, plainly, have had such conception of him. But the impression is not borne out by Scripture. The two instances recorded of him and his brother, of the exhibition of a fiery zeal and unsanctified ambition, if that passion ever can be sanctified—the one his stern judgment on the inhospitable Samaritans, whom he would have burnt with the fire of heaven; the other his request for a princely preëminence in the kingdom of Christ—do not present the idea of feebleness and puerility in his character. The surname of “Boanerges,” “sons of thunder,” bestowed on him and his brother by one who knew men’s inmost hearts, cannot be associated with the idea of softness and effeminacy if there be any correspondence between their character and that name. John was as masculine in intellect as he was affectionate in heart.

So little is told us of his life and relationships, of the influences that contributed to make him what he was, that the conception of him must

needs be very imperfect. Notwithstanding, it may be safely said that John's mental characteristic is his intensity; intensity of thought, of feeling, and of word. It springs from the constitution of his being. He is named the "apostle of love." Love is his chief theme—the profound, unchanging love of God. His own nature, as born of the Spirit of God, is permeated and dominated by love. In John it is by no means a soft and yielding sentiment, but a passion that seizes its object with all its might and holds it fast; a love that abruptly repels whatever tends to disgrace the beloved one, or to wrest Him from its grasp. It is this passionate and controlling love which fills and thrills John's writings, which glows on every page of them.

His insight into truth, divine, eternal truth, is piercing. He does not reach conclusions by trains of reasoning; no labored processes are encountered in him; *he sees.*¹ In a preëminent degree he possesses the intuitions of genius. He discerns truth by direct cognition, by an act of immediate knowledge. He does not arrive at his goal by constructive proof; his penetrative insight does not require this, nor even allow it. His mental vision pierces to the very heart of his subject and floods it with light. Unlike the vast majority of mortals, who must work their way

¹ Wescott.

gradually and often painfully toward their object, John seems to be poised over it, to view it from above, and to see it all, and all at once. In this Gospel, as certainly as in his Epistles and the Apocalypse, John is the *seer*. By rarest natural gifts, by the abundant grace communicated to him, above all, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, John was singularly fitted for the supreme task assigned him. His writings are in some aspects of them the most profound and difficult of all Scripture; and to understand and interpret them require the like grace and gift of the Spirit.

I. Some characteristic features of the Fourth Gospel.

1. It contains no parables. In x. 6 we read, “this (*παροιμία*) parable spake Jesus unto them”; but it is not the “parable” (*παραπολή*) so often found in the other gospels. That term John never uses. The word here has a wider significance, and includes every kind of figurative and proverbial teaching. It is equivalent to our allegory. The “good shepherd” and the “true vine” are allegories. (See also John xvi. 25, 29.) The absence of the parable in John is in harmony with the design of the writer. The book is the revelation of the person of Christ. In it the Spirit challenges for Him as the eternal Son of God the faith and adoration of all. Ac-

cordingly, Jesus does not here open His mouth in parables, but rather utters what has been kept secret from the foundation of the world. The Fourth Gospel may not inappropriately be called an apocalypse: for it unveils the glories of the Logos, the eternal Word.

2. Reflective commentary is intermingled with the narrative in John. The synoptics are largely historical. While John is likewise historical, he, unlike the others, interweaves much of personal reflection into the account. He often pauses to think over what he has written, to explain some reference, or to press home some vital truth.

3. The Fourth Gospel combines the characteristic features of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In it the distinctive glories of the others are seen to mingle and unite in the most instructive manner. In John the Messianic character is unequivocally ascribed to the Saviour. Here Nathanael says to Jesus, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (i. 49). It was to the woman at the well of Sychar that He declared Himself to be the long-expected Messiah, "I that speak to thee am he" (iv. 26). What He withheld from the sensuous Galilæans and the carping scribes He plainly tells this lost Samaritan. It is the joyful announcement of Philip to the guileless Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did

write" (i. 45). To Pilate, Jesus testified that He was a king; that His kingdom neither originated out of this world, nor drew its power from thence (xviii. 36, 37). This is a part of the "good confession witnessed before Pontius Pilate" to which Paul refers (1 Tim. vi. 13).

Here likewise Christ is represented as the sent of God, the minister of Jehovah and of needy man, as chapter vi. and like portions attest. Indeed, in no other gospel is the divine mission and commission of the Lord Jesus so much insisted on. He points to His heavenly credentials when any question as to His authority is started. Evermore does He refer to His appointment by the Father, when He would justify His ways before men or silence their senseless criticisms. In the brief compass of a few verses six times does He use the word "sent," or a like term, to substantiate the validity of His work and of His authority (v. 23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38). All through this Gospel He is found turning back to His commission from the Father. For all He does and says He has a divine warrant. He is the servant of God.

In none of the other gospels is Christ's humanity more distinctly recognized. Here we frequently find His self-chosen title, "Son of man"; His tender solicitude for His mother (xix. 26, 27); His soul agitation (xii. 27); His flesh and

blood (vi. 54-56); His incarnation (i. 14); His weariness (iv. 6); His hunger and thirst (iv. 7, 31; xix. 28). All the faculties, functions, and sinless infirmities of our nature are attributed to Him here as in the other narratives. The human limitations which are seen attaching to the Son of man in Mark and Luke are equally conspicuous in John.

And yet the view presented to us of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Fourth Gospel differs largely from the synoptic portrait of Him. It is the same Lord we are reading of in all four. But His moral and essential glory shines in John with a radiance all its own. John reveals Him preëminently as the Son of God.

The Fourth Gospel presupposes the other three. John seems to assume that the contents of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known to his readers. The historian Eusebius says it was current among the early Christians that the evangelist was acquainted with them. If so, we may believe that he wrote under the guidance of the Spirit in such fashion as to complete the picture of the Lord's ministry. But it would be wide of the mark to conceive of this Gospel as a supplement of the synoptists. Its structure is so perfect, and its plan and aim are so independent, as to preclude that notion. An appendix, the Fourth Gospel certainly is not.

Nor is it polemical. Assuming that it was written near the close of the first century (A. D. 80-90), we can readily perceive with what force its revelations as to the person of Christ would contradict certain false views then industriously circulated. Error early began to penetrate the churches, as we learn from some of Paul's epistles. Even gnosticism, that baneful scourge of the primitive times, was not unknown to that apostle, at least in its incipient stages, as the Epistle to the Colossians clearly attests. But when John wrote, this heresy was beginning to assume vast proportions. Cerinthus, one of its chief propagators, repaired to Ephesus while John was living there (so Irenæus informs us), and no doubt disseminated his false teaching. Now while the whole doctrine of John runs counter to the pernicious heresies then invading many of the Christian communities, nevertheless His purpose is neither controversial nor supplemental. The Fourth Gospel is an inspired presentation of the person and the work of the Son of God, that believing on Him we may be saved (xx. 31). In two other verses the heart of this Gospel is laid bare,—viz., in i : 14, the Incarnation, and in iii : 16, the love of God for man.

II. Analysis of the Gospel.

The book may be divided into three sections:

Section First: The Prologue: the Essential Glory of the Son of God, chapter i. 1-18—the link with the eternity past.

1. The Word in His absolute, eternal Being, verses 1, 2.

2. The Word in His relation with Creation, verses 3-5.

3. The reception of the Word by men, verses 6-13.

4. The Incarnation of the Word, and His Revelation of the Father, verses 14-18.

Section Second: Historical Manifestation of the Word, chapters i. 19-xix.—the link with time.

A. Revelation of the Son of God to man, chapters i. 19-xii.

1. Testimony of John to Jewish Deputation, chapter i. 19-34.

2. Testimony of First Disciples, i. 35-51.

3. Testimony of Jesus, chapters ii.-iv.

(a) The first Sign: Galilee, chapter ii. 1-11—the Lord.

(b) First Cleansing of the Temple: Jerusalem, ii. 12-25—the Judge.

(c) Discourse on the New Birth, chapter iii. 1-22—the Prophet.

(d) Testimony of John to his disciples, iii. 23-36.

(e) Testimony of Jesus to the Samaritans, chapter iv.

4. The Son of God as the Light, Life, and Truth, chapter v.-xii.

(1) He is the Source of Life, chapter v.

(a) Sign at Pool of Bethesda, v. 1-15.

(b) Discourse on the Meaning of the Sign, v. 16-47.

(c) Four Witnesses here introduced—viz., John, verse 33 ; Works, verse 36 ; The Father, verse 37 ; the Scriptures, verse 39.

(2) He is the Support of Life, chapters vi., vii.

(a) Sign of the Five Thousand fed, chapter vi. 1-23.

(b) Discourse on the Bread of Life, vi. 24-59.

(c) Issue of the Discourse, vi. 60-71.

(d) Various opinions of Him, chapter vii. 1-36.

(e) The Water of Life, vii. 37-39.

(f) Issue of the Discourse, vii. 40-53.

(3) He is the Judge, the Truth and the Light, chapters viii., ix.

(a) The Judge, chapter viii. 1-11.

(b) The Light of the World, viii. 12-30.

(c) The Truth, viii. 31-58.

(d) Issue of the Discourse, viii. 59.

- (e) Sign in proof that He is the Light and Truth, chapter ix. 1-33.
- (f) The Issue of the Sign and its Testimony, ix. 34-41.
- (4) He is the Shepherd of the Flock of God, chapter x.
 - (a) The True Shepherd, x. 1-13.
 - (b) The Good Shepherd, x. 14-18.
 - (c) Issue of the Discourse, x. 19-24.
 - (d) The Great Shepherd, x. 25-38.
 - (e) Issue of the Discourse, x. 39-42.
- (5) He is the Resurrection and the Life, chapter xi.
 - (a) Sign of Lazarus' Raising from the Dead, chapter xi. 1-44.
 - (b) Issue of the Sign, xi. 45-57.
- (6) His Public Testimony Closed, chapter xii.
 - (a) His Anointing, xii. 1-8.
 - (b) Judgment of Men about Him, xii. 9-19.
 - (c) Judgment of Jesus, xii. 20-36.
 - (d) Judgment of the Evangelist, xii. 37-43.
 - (e) Judgment of the Word of God, xii. 44-50.

B. Revelation of the Son of God to Believers, chapters xiii.-xvii.

1. The Son of God is Believers' Lord, chapter xiii.

(1) He is their Example in self-sacrificing Service, xiii. 1-17.

(2) He excludes the Faithless Disciple, xiii. 18–35.

(3) He forewarns the Imperiled Disciple, xiii. 36–38.

2. The Son of God is Believers' Surety-Redeemer, chapter xiv.

(1) He is the Way to God and Glory, xiv. 1–7.

(2) He is their Mediator with the Father, xiv. 8–15.

(a) Reveals the Father, verses 8–11.

(b) Promises them greater Works, verse 12.

(c) Bids them use His name in Prayer, verses 13–15.

(3) He gives them the greatest Gift, xiv. 16–31.

(a) Another Comforter, One like Himself, One instead of Himself, to be in them, to abide with them, verses 16–25.

(b) One to teach them, confirm them, verses 26–31.

3. The Son of God is Believers' Life, chapters xv., xvi.

(1) He is the Source and Supply of their Life, chapter xv. 1–10.

(2) He is the Source and Support of their Joy and Love, xv. 11–17.

(3) He is their Support in their Conflict with the World, xv. 18–xvi. 24.

(4) He will be their Supreme Bliss at His Coming, xvi. 25-33.

4. The Son of God is Believers' Intercessor, chapter xvii.

(1) He prays for Himself, xvii. 1-5.

(2) He prays for His disciples, verses 6-19.

(3) He prays for Church Universal, vs. 20-26.

C. The Revelation of the Son of God in His Death as Sin Bearer, chapters xviii., xix.

1. The Son of God before Human Tribunals, chapters xviii.-xix. 16.

(1) His Majestic Bearing in the Garden, xviii. 1-11.

(2) His Calm Dignity before the Sanhedrin, xviii. 12-27.

(3) His Divine Demeanor before the Roman Bar, xviii. 28-xix. 16.

2. The Crucifixion, chapter xix. 17-37.

His Words on the Cross.

Filial Love: "Behold thy son: Behold thy mother."

Scripture Fulfilled: "I thirst."

Shout of the Victor: "It is finished."

His Death Voluntary: "He delivered up His spirit."

3. The Burial, chapter xix. 38-42.

Section Third: Manifestation of the Son of

God in Resurrection, Power, and Glory, chapters xx., xxi.

1. The Son of God as Conqueror of Death, chapter xx.

(1) The Empty Tomb, xx. 1-10.

(2) His Manifestation to Mary Magdalene, xx. 11-18.

(3) His Manifestation to the Disciples (Thomas absent), xx. 19-25.

(4) His Manifestation to the Disciples (Thomas present), xx. 26-31.

2. The Son of God as the Lord of Glory, chapter xxi. This chapter is the epilogue of the Gospel, and answers to the prologue of chapter i. 1-18. It is the link with eternity future.

(1) The Miraculous Draught of Fishes (xxi. 1-14). It is a reproduction of the like miracle when some of these seven men were first called (Luke v. 5-11). They had virtually renounced their mission and gone back to their old occupation. The risen Lord now reinstates them, re-commissions Peter, and predicts his martyrdom (xxi. 15-19).

(2) The significant hypothetical saying (xxi. 20-25).

Such is an imperfect analysis of this marvelous Scripture. Some very notable things are apparent in it, only two of which may be here set down.

1. The Fourth Gospel is perfect in structure

and plan. Every incident recorded, every sign wrought, every discourse reported, and every reflection of the writer bear directly on the august theme—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. There is not a superfluous or irrelevant sentence in the book. Where in all the range of human literature can there be picked out another writing of the same length that for unity, lucidity, depth, height, and power, can for a moment be compared with this Gospel?

2. The prologue (i. 1-18) is the key and core of the Gospel of John. Not only does the inspired writer start with this stupendous revelation of the Son of God, but he never loses sight of it to the very end. He develops it, unfolds it, and applies it throughout the entire book. This appears in the names he gives to Christ, in the world's hostility to Him, in the development of belief and disbelief, in the revelation of Jesus to men and to His disciples, and in the majestic scenes succeeding the resurrection. Wonderful are Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but John exceeds.

III. The Design of John. On opening the Fourth Gospel we instinctively feel that we are on very high ground indeed. Here the Lord Jesus is revealed as the eternal Word, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. We are confronted with the transcendent fact that Jesus

is none other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament, God manifest in the flesh. John, accordingly, is the Gospel of the divine Sonship of the Saviour. Luke and John may be regarded as somewhat contrastive, although they treat of the one glorious person. Certainly the Redeemer of Luke is the eternal Word of John. The characteristic difference is this: Luke gives prominence to the humanity of Jesus, to His compassions, His pity, His tenderness, and sympathies; John, to His personal dignity and glory as the Son of God. In Luke, He is seen *going down* to man's circumstances and needs; in John, as *drawing* men *up* to Himself (xii. 32). In Luke, He is the Friend and Brother of men, the one who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, the one who comes to men where they are, and as they are offers to redeem them. In Matthew, He is Messiah the King; and in Mark, the Burden-bearer. In John, He is all this, and besides in every act He performs, in every word He speaks, in every title He takes, and in every blessing He brings, He is the Son of God, Himself God.

In chapter xx. 30, 31, the evangelist definitely states the design on account of which the Gospel has been written: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the

Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.” John’s narrative contains only part of Jesus’ “signs.” His record is representative, not exhaustive. He writes a gospel, not a life. But these marvelous specimens he has given us have but one aim, and one alone : that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and this to the end we may have eternal life. This is his subject and his purpose. In the briefest possible compass, let us endeavor to possess ourselves of the proofs which establish this majestic proposition “THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD : AND THAT, BELIEVING, YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”

1. Four Witnesses, summoned by Christ Himself, attest it (chapter v. 31-40). The Jews accused Him of making Himself God’s equal in that He called God “his own Father” (v. 18, R. V.). In reply Jesus declares that He is the judge of the world (v. 22, 23) ; the quickener of the *spiritually* dead (v. 25) and of the physically dead (v. 28, 29). Then He introduces His witnesses : First, John the Baptist (v. 33), “Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.” The reference is to the memorable scene at the Jordan, the baptism, and the visible descent of the Spirit upon the Son of man, concerning which

John said: "And I saw, and bare *record* that this is the Son of God" (i. 34). Second, the greater witness—viz., His works (v. 36, R.V.). "The very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." They are the deeds which express the nature and compass of His will, the mighty powers He possessed, and they indicate the superhuman qualities of His person. Third, "the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me" (v. 37). In a manner, to an extent, and in conscious reality, such as no mere creature can understand or experience, the Father's testimony was given His well-beloved Son. Fourth, the Scriptures: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (v. 39). The reference is to the Old Testament Scriptures, and our Lord declares that in their totality they attest His claims and His mission. Accordingly, He must be the Messiah, the Son of God, for His advent is the burden of their testimony.

2. The names and titles given our Lord in John are descriptive of His person as the Son of God, and are proofs of His Messianic mission.

(1) The Word (i. 1): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This great name appears to be derived from the Old Testament phrase, "The

Word of the Lord" (Ps. xxxiii. 6; cvii. 20; cxlvii. 15, 18; 1 Sam. iii. 1-4).¹ That it designates the Lord Jesus Christ there can be no doubt. Three things are here asserted of Him: His eternity; His eternal separate existence; His deity. There is implied in it likewise the fact that He is the supreme revelator of God. He reveals God to men, and men to themselves. Thus we are told, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (i. 18). The word that John wrote for our English "declare" ($\varepsilon\zeta\gamma\gamma\sigma\alpha\tau\omega$) (i. 18) is the source of the word "exegesis," and we might venture to read, "He hath interpreted Him," has made Him known.

¹ In these and similar passages divine attributes are predicated of the Word of the Lord, e. g., *authority* (Gen. xv. 4); *creative energy*, (Ps. xxxiii. 6); *healing*, (Ps. cvii. 20); *agent of God's will*, (Isa. lv. 10, 11). Jewish teachers early recognized the power which Scripture thus ascribes to God's Word, and accordingly they named it *Memra-Jehovah*, the Word of Jehovah. Thus, Gen. iii. 8, 9, was paraphrased by them, "they heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God." Such views of the Old Testament were no doubt common in John's time, and he was familiar with them. But he attaches a deeper and a fuller meaning to the great term *Logos*. That he did not employ it in the sense of the Alexandrian school appears more than probable. That he did not derive it from Plato is certain. The Spirit of God does not resort to heathen sources for His material. In the Old Testament "word of the Lord" Christ was foreshadowed. He is revealed in John's doctrine of the *Logos* (see Cremer, *sub voce*).

Christ is the supreme expositor of the invisible God.

(2) The Life (i. 4): "In him was life" (cp. xiv. 6). He is the author and maintainer of all life, particularly of spiritual and eternal life. He imparts it equally with the Father (v. 21): "Even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." John ascribes to Him the work of creation (i. 3), as does Paul also (Col. i. 16, 17).

(3) The Light (i. 9): "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (R. V.). He is the great illuminator of men. He always has been and always will be. Light is sometimes used in Scripture for salvation, sometimes for holiness, often for divine and saving knowledge. Of all this and much more Christ is the fountain.

(4) Only Begotten (i. 14, 18, etc.): "The only begotten Son." Wherever this term occurs, and it is found nine times in the New Testament, it invariably expresses the idea of a single person; but there is but *one* in the class designated by "only begotten," whether it be a human family, or the ineffable relationship of the Son with the Father. "Only begotten" stands absolutely alone in His place. There is no other person in all the universe who sustains the like relation with God as the only begotten Son.

(5) The Lamb of God (i. 29): "Behold the

Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He is the propitiation God has provided. As such He meets and settles forever the whole question of sin as between God the righteous Judge and the believing sinner. As such He fulfills the gracious prediction of Isa. liii. 7, 12, the typical promise in the paschal lamb, and the prophecy of the smitten one in Zech. xii. 7.

(6) Son of God (i. 34, 49 ; iii. 18 ; ix. 35, etc.). That His great claim to be one with the Father is bound up with this title is evident from the impression its use made on the Jews, and from their charge of blasphemy preferred against Him on account of it (v. 18 ; x. 30, 33). As Son, He declares Himself to be the object of the Father's highest love (iii. 35 ; v. 20). As Son, He discharges the same august offices as the Father (v. 21-29). As Son, He reciprocates the Father's knowledge of Himself by an equivalent knowledge of the Father (x. 14, 15). As Son, He recognizes no essential distinction between Himself and the Father, except that which is inseparable from the relationship of the one to the other in the economy of redemption (x. 30 ; xiv. 28). As Son, He needs no information about men, for He knows all men, and what is in man (ii. 24, 25). He is most thoroughly acquainted with man, with his secret thoughts, motives, purposes, and history, as His words to Nicodemus, to the woman

at the well, to the cripple at the pool, prove. Perfect knowledge of them and matchless wisdom in dealing with them belong to Him.

(7) The True Bread (vi. 32). True, not in the sense that there is no other, or that all other bread is false; but true because the only real and genuine. He is the bread of which all other bread is but a dim shadow, an imperfect type. And this He is because He is the Bread of God, the Bread of Life, the Living Bread, the Bread of Heaven.

(8) The Shepherd (x.). Therefore He is the Redeemer, provider, protector, and guide of His flock. This magnificent presentation of Christ as the Shepherd of the flock of God answers to the Twenty-third Psalm, the finest pastoral ever penned. There the believer confidently says, "The Lord is my shepherd." Here Christ replies, "I am the good shepherd." As such He knows all His people, their names, dwelling places, their private history, experience, trials. As such He tenderly cares for them, provides for them, protects, and leads them, "going before." If there be difficulties and dangers in the way, He first encounters them. He even lays down His life for them, and shields them in His own and His Father's hand. Assuredly, each one of them may with overflowing gladness say, "I shall not want" . . . "Surely goodness and

mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

(9) The Resurrection (xi. 25): "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (R. V.). Therefore He is the conqueror of death, the deliverer from the grave, the giver of a life which death can in nowise touch. At His girdle swing "the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. i. 18, R. V.). Note the double title Christ employs, "resurrection" and "life." To these correspond the precious promise that every sleeping child of God shall be raised up, and every living saint shall by no means die forever. I believe the reference is to His second coming in both cases; dead saints shall then be raised, and living believers shall never die at all (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). Christ is both the first fruits of the sleeping saints, and the agent who will transform living believers (1 Cor. xv. 51).

(10) The True Vine (xv. 1). He is the source and supply of the life of His people who are united to Him; and the life they receive is divine, eternal, for it is His own.

These are some of the distinctive names and titles given our Lord in this Gospel. To draw out at length their bearing on John's main theme is unnecessary; the reader can do this for

himself. It is enough to say that they describe a unique person whose rank in the scale of being and whose exalted place in the purposes and counsels of God are not those of a mere creature, nor can be. He is the Son of God.

3. The miracles of John witness to the same august truth. Of the eight recorded, six are found here alone, and these are introduced with reference to the doctrine, or to the form of doctrine, which asserts His glory as the fellow and equal of God. They are such as display Him before our eyes as, beyond all controversy, God. The term that John uniformly employs to designate Christ's supernatural works is very definite and expressive—"sign." The words for "miracles" so often occurring in the other gospels are omitted by John entirely, save one, and it He uses but once—viz., "wonders" (iv. 48). "Signs" is his significant appellation. When Christ's miraculous actions which are so plentifully described in the synoptists are referred to by John, he calls them "works," as if they were perfectly natural to Him, and what might be expected from the Son of God. But "signs" belong to a distinct class of miracles in John. What does he mean by them? "Sign," according to John, is a supernatural deed of the Lord Jesus, wrought for a very definite purpose, and it is intended to reveal His character. So the apostle himself

appears to define it the very first time he uses it (ii. 11), "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory" (R. V.). Nothing in the least like this is said of the miracles of prophet or apostle, nor indeed could without manifest blasphemy be said of any mere creature (Brown). The "sign" manifested His glory, revealed, disclosed it, thus fulfilling what is said of Him in i. 14, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." It is very significantly added (ii. 11), "And his disciples believed on him." The "sign" achieved its double purpose—it revealed the Lord of glory, and it led the disciples to believe on Him.

He is called the Creator in i. 3, and His right to the supreme title is proved by His changing the water into wine (ii. 1-11), a creative act. He is the Life (i. 4), and the title is made good by the healing of the nobleman's son (iv. 46-54). He claims to quicken the dead (v. 21), and confirms the claim by curing the man as good as dead for thirty-eight years (v. 2-9). He announces Himself as the Light of the world (viii. 12), and proves it by opening the eyes of one born blind (ix. 1-8). He saith, "I am the resurrection and the life," and at His command Lazarus starts forth from the sleep of death, the living witness of His glory and His power (xi. 25,

43, 44). When the six disciples, led by Peter, proposed to return to their old occupation of fishing, Jesus as the risen Head of His people recalled them to their true work by a second draught of fishes (xxi. 6). Every great name He takes, and every divine claim He makes, He substantiates by His "signs."

4. The discourses of Jesus recorded in John testify to the theme of His divine Sonship. More than any of the other three does John reproduce Christ's teachings on this subject. In Matthew the discourses relate mainly to the kingdom of heaven. The addresses in Luke bear the mark of the Spirit's aim in that Gospel. In John these and the like features are found, but they are not made prominent. That which is here preëminent in the Lord's teaching is Himself, His own person and work as the Son of God. The discourses in John are self-revelations. They are disclosures of Christ Himself: His mysterious person, His relation with the Father, His relation to the world, to His own people, His thoughts, purposes, character, and mission.

But a clear distinction is maintained between His addresses to the unbelieving Jews and those to His disciples. In the former, the revelation of Himself is veiled. A strange reserve is practiced. Love will not give out all its message, for it can-

not. There is no receptivity in the hearers. Jesus will witness to His own infinite dignity, to His oneness with the Father, to His Messiahship. But he does it with solemn warnings intermingled, and awful rebukes, and profound grief. With indescribable pathos He says to the hostile Pharisees : “ Ye neither know me, nor my Father. I go my way, and ye shall die in your sins. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life ” (viii. 19, 21 ; v. 40.) With the sternness of absolute truth and righteousness He must tell them they are the children of the devil (viii. 44) ; are not of His sheep (x. 26) ; that they should soon lose the Light now shining among them (xii. 35, 36). He could say with perfect truthfulness when all was over, and their doom sealed, “ They hated me without a cause ” (xv. 25).

But to His disciples, His own who loved and trusted Him, whom He likewise loved and trusted, He pours out all the affection of His infinite heart. They are His sheep, His friends. Them He comforts as one whom His mother comforts (xiv. 1-4) ; with them He shares His own peace (xiv. 27) ; His own joy (xv. 11) ; His own glory (xvii. 22). To them He tells unreservedly all that is for their comfort and guidance, and for His glory. For they are to be with Him where He is and as He is—sharers in His bliss. He tells them, “ Henceforth I call you not servants ; for

the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (xv. 15). It is a condition of servitude not to be made acquainted with the master's plans or purposes. It is a condition of friendship to share the thoughts and counsels of the friend. "The secret of the Lord is with" those who are His friends (Ps. xxv. 14): the margin of the Revised Version reads, "The friendship of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and his covenant to make them know it." For them He offers the marvelous intercessory prayer of chapter xvii.—the high-priestly prayer—"The-one-with-Christ-in-glory-prayer," as one has named it. Them He addresses as "My brethren," a dearer name by far than "servant," or "disciple," or "friend." Some features of these august discourses may be pointed out.

(1) Their volume. Fifteen chapters, in whole or in part, are taken up with them, to wit, chapters iii.—xvii, and chapter xxi. Some of these chapters contain only the words of the Lord Jesus, man's words finding but a very small place in them—*e.g.*, xiv.—xvii. Even in the chapters which are more strictly historical His words find no unimportant place (xviii.—xx.).

(2) The subjects treated are numerous and fundamental—*e.g.*, the New Birth, the Living

Water, the Deliverer and Judge, the Bread of Life, the Spirit and His office, the Shepherd, the Resurrection, and the Judge. The discourses on these great topics occupy chapters iii.-xii. and they were addressed in the main to the multitudes. But from this point on to the close—viz., chapters xiii.-xxi.—they pertain to the disciples alone. They are the Lord's valedictory to His own whom having loved during His sojourn with them He loved to the end (xiii.-xvii.). Three things are made very prominent in these farewell discourses: *a.* A lesson in humility and mutual service (xiii.); *b.* Comfort administered, peace assured, hope confirmed, love displayed, guidance and guardianship pledged; for the Holy Spirit is to come to them with all the fullness and blessedness of His abiding presence (xiv.-xvi.); *c.* The Intercessory Prayer (xvii.), wherein He first makes request in behalf of the Father's glory; second, He claims His own glory; third, He asks for the preservation and glorification of all His people.

(3) The personal element. The self-consciousness of the Lord Jesus is a peculiarity of John that constantly arrests the attention of the reader. No matter how profound His humiliation—and John never forgets it—or how marked the human limitations He imposed on Himself when He assumed our nature, evermore He is here represented

as being perfectly cognizant of His own preëxistence, His personal dignity, and the glory which essentially belonged to Him. He calls Himself "the Son of God" (v. 25; x. 36), declares that He is the sole way of access to the Father (xiv. 6), that to know Him is to know the Father also, to have seen Him is likewise to have seen the Father (xiv. 7-9), and that if "anything" be asked in His name He will do it (xiv. 13, 14). By these and such like tremendous assumptions of divine dignity and power He reveals Himself as perfectly conscious of whence He is, the errand upon which He is come, and the ineffable union and communion with the Father implied and involved in these high claims. The "Son of God" is the eternal companion of and coöperator with the Father. Of all who ever walked on this earth He alone said, and had the supreme right to say, "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (xvi. 28). He is the center of all God's counsels, the sum and body of all the truth He reveals.

Observe the constant and significant use of the phrase "*I am.*" "*I am the way, the truth, and the life;*" "*I am the door;*" "*I am the vine;*" "*I am the resurrection.*" Scores of times He thus speaks of Himself. In viii. 58 He speaks an amazing word, "Verily, verily, I say unto

you, Before Abraham was, I am." The antithesis between the terms "was" and "am" is as strong as it can well be; "before Abraham was born (Diodati's Italian; R. V. margin), I am," not "was." There was a time when Abraham was not; there never was a time when the Son of God was not. But His words involve much more than priority of existence. If Jesus meant no more than that He existed before Abraham, He would have said, "Before Abraham was, I was." But this he does not say. His "I am" goes infinitely deeper; it connects Him, nay, identifies Him, with the august title of Jehovah Himself, "I am that I am" (Ex. iii. 14). "His human consciousness gave utterance to the awful depths of the eternal Ego." In xvii. 24, He prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me"—language which no mere creature should dare address to Almighty God.

(4) The Infinitude of His Knowledge. This is most wonderful both in its comprehensiveness and minuteness. He knows the Father, and His will; the mission upon which He is come, and its issue. He knows the elect, the sheep given Him of the Father; and the certainty that not one of them shall ever perish. He knows the thoughts of the disciples, the plans of the traitor,

the denial of Peter, the Scriptures that speak of Himself, and the whole work given Him to do. Heaven, earth, the invisible world, time, eternity, men, angels—He knows them all. He is in heaven while on the earth (iii. 13).¹

5. The Fourth Gospel represents Christ as the accomplishment of Old Testament types. In the Lord Jesus, John finds the embodiment of much that in the olden time was both dim and distant. So does Matthew, but with a difference. Matthew is chiefly concerned with the events in the Saviour's life which fulfilled Messianic prophecies. If we may so say, John goes deeper. He shows that Jesus Himself is the substance and reality of Old Testament shadows and pictures. He is the realization of all that nourished the faith and animated the hope of the saints who

¹ Against John iii. 13 the margin of the Revised Version has "many ancient authorities omit *which is in heaven*." Wescott and Hort omit these words from their Greek Text, but print them in the margin. On the other hand, Tischendorf (8th Ed.), Tregelles, Alford, Weymouth's Resultant Text, Stuttgart Edition (1838), all retain them. Whitney: "The evidence in support of their genuineness is 'simply overwhelming'" (Rev. Gr. Text, vol. ii. p. 18). Burgon: "The precious clause in question is in 10 versions, 38 Fathers, and in every MS., except five of bad character" (R. R., pp. 132, 3). It is easier to account for their omission from some copies than to explain them as a gloss. Their very difficulty argues for their genuineness. No copyist would be likely to invent such a profound phrase.

patiently waited for the promise. Christ is the tabernacle and the shekinah glory enshrined within it ; i. 14, “ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” Picturesque is the term for “dwelt”—“tabernacled,” literally—and it points to the sacred tent of the wilderness in which God dwelt (2 Sam. vii. 6). In the human form of Jesus there tented, as we might say, the infinite glory of the Deity. He is the temple (ii. 19–21). A sign was sought, and one was given, an enigma : “ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” A double “ sign ”—His own body and the temple there before them. Both would be destroyed by the hands of men ; His body, that soon would be raised again ; the temple, to be reproduced in the Church He was founding, a holy temple to be dwelt in by the Spirit of the living God (Eph. ii. 20–22). He is the ladder of angelic ascent and descent (i. 51, cp. Gen. xxviii. 12). He is all that was signified by the lamb of the first passover, and the lamb brought silently to the slaughter (i. 29, 36, cp. Ex. xii. 13, Isa. lii. 7). He is the reality of all that the brazen serpent in the wilderness effected and predicted, for He is the true remedy for the poison-virus of sin (iii. 14, 15, cp. Num. xxi. 9). He is the true Manna (vi. 32). Abraham saw

His day, and was glad (viii. 56). Moses wrote of Him (v. 46). Isaiah saw His glory, and spake of Him (vii. 41). Jesus Christ in His person, mission, and offices is, according to John, the one preëminent theme of all Scripture. Toward Him all its lines converge; in Him all its strange voices harmonize and blend; in Him its mighty promises and predictions find their ample fulfillment.

6. Christ's extraordinary claims, so conspicuous in John, attest His divine character and mission. With many of these claims we have already met in the course of this study. But they are so remarkable, and some of them so transcendently great, that they deserve further notice. Jesus declares that for a particular end was He sent, and that God the Father sent Him on such errand (iii. 16; x. 10; xvi. 28; xviii. 37). He announces that whoever hears His word and believes Him that sent Him hath eternal life, and shall never come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (v. 24, R. V.); that He gives eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him (xvii. 2); that He will raise up all that believe in Him at the last day (vi. 39, 40); that at His bidding all the dead shall come forth from their graves (v. 29); that those to whom He gives eternal life shall never perish, nor shall any one snatch them out of His hand (x. 28, R. V.). With the calmness that is

begotten of conscious truth, and power, He declares that if He be lifted up He will draw all men to Himself (xii. 32); that if His people ask anything in His name He will do it for them (xiv. 14).

He says that He is in the Father, and the Father is in Him (xiv. 10). All that which is the Father's, is therefore His (xvii. 10). He is from above (viii. 23)—a fact the Baptist recognizes, and hence says that He is above all (iii. 31). He, and He alone, has seen the Father (vi. 46). In nature, operation, and majesty, He is one with the Father (xiv. 9; v. 17, 19, 21). In the consciousness of the perfect rectitude of His ways, He challenges His enemies to convict Him of sin (viii. 46, R.V.). In the solemn crisis of His life, when the deep shadow of the cross was falling on Him, He could say, “The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing at all in me” (xiv. 30, Greek). This fell spirit came to Adam and Eve, and found weakness. He came to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Paul, John, and to all the saints, and found imperfection. He came to Christ, and found infinite strength and invincible fullness in Him.

To the amazed Jews He said, “No one taketh it [my life] away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (x. 18, R. V.). This is the language of one whose life was absolutely His

own. Over it and over His own death Christ had supreme control. Of no mere man can so much be said ; of no creature, either, not even of the highest angel. We die because we *must*. With our birth the struggle between death and life begins, and death is always the victor. Over the whole race death reigns, except in the case of the man Christ Jesus. He held His life and His death in His own right. No creature, angel or mortal, could wrest it from Him. Himself laid it down, Himself took it again. His death was voluntary, yet a necessity, if the sheep were ever to be saved. Without a word or a hint of disapproval He permits Thomas to address Him with the awful words, "My Lord, and my God" (xx. 28), titles that are equivalent to the two great names of the Old Testament, "LORD God" (Jehovah God).

It is noteworthy likewise that the Lord Jesus is superior to human intercession. He never asks His disciples to pray for Him, though He constantly urges the duty and necessity of prayer. Paul writes to his fellow-saints, "Brethren, pray for us;" "pray for me." But such is never the language of Jesus. In His only prayer recorded by John (xvii.), He does not put Himself into the same category with the disciples. He maintains the distance of His own proper relations with the Father and His personal dignity between Himself and them. He does not include them

with Himself in the personal pronouns in it. He always says "I," and "me," and "these" and "them" that "thou hast given me;" never "we" and "us," as we speak, and should speak, in our petitions. Even in intercession He is solitary, unique—the heavenly stranger in the world.

In view of these majestic claims, we can with utmost confidence write the profound words of Paul, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). For He is "the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of His substance" (Heb. i. 3, R. V.). The ancient formula expresses the exact truth: "*Si Christus non Deus, non bonus*"—"If Christ be not God, He is not good."

7. The omissions in John accord with the writer's plan. There is no genealogy; instead we have His eternal preëxistence asserted. There is no sermon on the mount, nor in the plain; instead, Christ Himself is presented as Light, and Life, and Truth. No description of the character, relations, and duties of a subject in the kingdom of God; instead, we have the character, relations, and life of those who receive Christ, who are united to Him, and are dwelt in by His Spirit. In John we find nothing of the call of the apostles, nor the mission of evangelists; instead, the far-reaching words of the Lord: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go

and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (xv. 16). There is no reference to the transfiguration, nor to the Lord's Supper, nor to Christian Baptism. There are no shrinking apprehensions of the cross, no Gethsemane, and no angel strengthens Him. When the band of officers and men, with Judas at their head, appear in the garden to arrest Him, they go "backward and fall to the ground" at His simple "I am he" (xviii. 6). To the Roman judge, with the colossal power of the vast empire behind him, Jesus says, "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (xviii. 37; xix. 11).

No company of women bewail Him, no dying malefactor testifies, "This man hath done nothing amiss." Nor is it here recorded that He spoke the words of Psalm xxii. 1, words so solemn, so appalling in their mysteriousness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Nor any prayer, "Father, forgive them," "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." On the cross, in John, He speaks three words: the first, as if on a quiet deathbed, He provides for His mother; the second, "I thirst," that the Scripture might be fulfilled; the third, "It is finished," the shout of the conqueror.

IV. Summary of the Principal Doctrines in the Fourth Gospel.

1. The Teaching of John as respects God. It is very comprehensive and deep. We can do no more than offer an epitome of it.

(1) "God is (a) Spirit" (iv. 24). It is of the divine Nature, or Essence, Jesus is here speaking. As a Spirit, God is absolutely free from limitations of time and space. As a Spirit, He is invisible and therefore without form (i. 18). This infinite and eternal Spirit is revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ (i. 18). If, in connection with this, we may take the other two descriptive titles found in 1 John i. 5; iv. 8, God is declared to be "Spirit," "Light," and "Love."

(2) God is Father. John represents our Lord as continually speaking of God as "the Father," "my Father," "your Father." No less than one hundred and twenty-one times is this title found in the Fourth Gospel. The Old Testament is not silent as to God's Fatherhood. The prophets know Him as the Father of the Hebrew people (Deut. xxxii. 6; Isa. lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8). The synoptists advance the doctrine much farther, and speak of Him as the Father of the Lord Jesus (Matt. xi. 27), and of believers (Matt. v. 16, 45). But in John the doctrine is carried far beyond anything found in the Old Testament Scriptures or in the other

gospels. Here it is the fullness of the epistles that we find. God is the eternal Father (xvii. 5), the holy Father (xvii. 11), the righteous Father (xvii. 25). He is the living Father (vi. 57), who has life in Himself (v. 26), who raises up the dead (v. 21), and who seeks spiritual worshipers (iv. 23). He is greater than all (x. 29); greater than the Son (xiv. 28). He loves the Son (v. 20) and loves all who believe in the Son (xiv. 21; xvi. 27). The Father sends the Son (x. 36); seals the Son (vi. 27); bears testimony to the Son (v. 37; viii. 18). Jesus' teaching is the Father's (vii. 16; viii. 28); His works are the Father's (xiv. 10); His words are the Father's (xvii. 8); and He reveals the Father's name to the disciples (xvii. 26).

2. The Teaching of John as to the Person of Christ. With singular power John unfolds the glories of the Lord Jesus. He dwells on His essential glory, the glory He had with the Father before the world was. With a superhuman pen he traces His moral glory, *i.e.*, the absolute perfection that marked every path He trod on earth, every relation He sustained toward God and men. John presents Him as the spotless One who was near men in their weakness, helplessness, need, and sinfulness, but who was apart from all their tempers, their selfishness and sin. He did more than look upon the misery that was

round Him ; He entered into it with a sympathy that was all His own. He did more than refuse the pollution that was round Him ; He kept the very distance of holiness itself from every touch and stain of it. His holiness made Him an utter stranger in such a polluted world ; His grace kept Him ever active in such a needy world. How full, complete is John concerning the Lord's moral glory ! Nor is our evangelist silent as to Christ's official glory, *i. e.*, the glory He won for Himself as the reward of His perfect obedience to the Father's will. He is here crowned with glory and honor in view of His finished work. But John gives us much more than this, precious as are these glories of the Lord.

(1) The Messiahship of Jesus is most distinctly taught (i. 50, 51 ; iv. 26 ; xi. 27). As the promised Messiah He is the prophet who teaches, the priest who atones, and the king foretold.

(2) The union of the two Natures, the divine and the human, in His one person, is as distinctly taught. The mystery of His complex personality is constantly before us as we read. Human limitations and illimitable power are strangely present in Him. He rests a weary, thirsty traveler at the well of Sychar, yet He tells the Samaritan woman the secrets of her life. At the grave of Lazarus human tears of sorrow stream down His face while the commanding voice cries, " Lazarus,

come forth!" In the garden the mob go backward and fall to the ground at His majestic "I am he," yet He is taken, bound, and led away. He is crucified, yet He Himself surrenders His spirit. John xvi. 28 is an epitome of the whole doctrine of the person and mission of the Lord Jesus, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." From God, into the world, back to God; preexistence, incarnation, glorification; oneness with the Father, procession from the Father, redemption completed. He is the God-Man, uniting two natures in His one person, distinct yet mysteriously blending.

3. The Teaching as respects the Holy Spirit. John is fuller and clearer on this great subject than the other gospels combined.

(1) His personality is affirmed. Every quality, action, mark, and sign that can indicate personality are ascribed to Him in language that refuses to be explained away.

(2) His mission by the Father and the Son is taught (xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7).

(3) He is given in consequence of Christ's glorification (vii. 39; xvi. 7).

(4) He is called the paraclete, helper, comforter; "another comforter," one instead of Christ, one like Christ, one in addition to Christ (xiv. 16; xv. 26).

(5) He is to testify of Christ, and glorify Him (xv. 27; xvi. 13, 14).

(6) He is to be in believers, and abide with them forever (xiv. 17).

(7) He is to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (xvi. 8-11).

4. The Teaching as respects the World. By this is meant, chiefly, mankind. The "world" in John is that whole order of things which is estranged from God, which is hostile to Him, to His Son, and to His cause. The world in this Gospel (1) knows not God the Father, nor Christ (xvii. 25; i. 10); (2) it hates Christ and His people (vii. 7; xv. 19; xvii. 14); (3) Satan is its prince (xii. 31; xvi. 11); (4) Christ's kingdom is not of this world (xviii. 36); (5) God loves the world (iii. 16); (6) Christ's mission is to bring salvation to the world, and to call His people out of it (iii. 16, 17; xv. 19); (7) Christ shall judge the world (v. 22, 23).

5. The Teaching as respects the New Birth. We are told that the agent of regeneration is the Spirit of God (iii. 5); that the necessity of it is so imperative that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, he cannot enter it (iii. 3, 5); that this mighty change in our nature can never be wrought by human agency (i. 13). How sweeping is the assertion of this verse! "Not of blood" are we born into God's

family. Not by virtue of a godly parentage, nor because of a holy ancestry, do we become the children of God in the highest and truest sense; grace is not hereditary, sin is. Nor "of the will of the flesh," *i. e.*, by reformation, by taking stiff hold of our wills and compelling ourselves to live upright lives. Nor "of the will of man," by the influence, the mastery of other men's wills upon us, are we brought into God's family. In none of these ways are we begotten into the new and eternal life. We are born "of God." How radical is the teaching! Jesus sounds the lowest deeps into which men are plunged by sin, shows how complete and dreadful the ruin is; so bad it is that God does not propose to mend it; He creates something altogether new.

6. The Teaching as respects Faith. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is truly required and its blessedness is exhibited in the other gospels, as indeed throughout all Scripture; but in the Gospel by John it is made prominent. On its presence or absence in the heart of man every relation to God and to well-being is made to turn. More than one hundred times do the terms *believe*, *believe not*, occur in John. The life, the privileges, the bliss, and the glory of him that believes; the loss, the misery, the judgment, and the death of him that believes not, how full

of them is this Gospel! It might almost be called the Gospel of Faith.

Faith rests on testimony. The testimony offered in this Gospel is the most trustworthy that can be furnished, for it is both divine and human. The divine witnesses are, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures (v. 39). The human witnesses are unimpeachable both as to numbers and credibility. Some are here cited: John the Baptist (iii. 27-36); Nathanael (i. 49, 50); Disciples (ii. 11); Woman of Samaria (iv. 29); Samaritans (iv. 42); Blind Man (ix. 36-38); Martha (xi. 27); Thomas (xx. 28); John the Apostle (xx. 31; xxi. 24); Moses (v. 46, 47); Isaiah (xii. 41).

The testimony is varied, ample, conclusive. More than forty-five times the verb, "to bear witness," and the noun, "witness," or "testimony," are found in John. The evidence, therefore, on which faith may rest with assured confidence, is all that can be asked. Christ, God's gift to the world, is the sole object of faith (iii. 14-18). The work of God is, to believe in Him whom He has sent (vi. 29). The Spirit is received through faith in the Lord Jesus (vii. 39).

But now note the action of faith as here displayed.

(1) Faith is believing God's testimony about His Son, v. 24; vi. 40.

(2) Faith believes (hears) Christ's words, iv. 42; v. 24.

(3) Faith believes Christ's works, x. 38; xi. 45; xiv. 11.

(4) Faith receives the Spirit's testimony, xv. 26; xvi. 14.

(5) Faith receives the disciples' testimony, xvii. 20.

(6) Faith feeds on Christ as the living bread, vi. 35.

(7) Faith drinks of the water Christ gives, iv. 14; vii. 37, 38.

Note likewise some of its effects:—

(1) By faith we become God's children, i. 12.

(2) Faith delivers from condemnation, iii. 18.

(3) Faith delivers from the judgment, v. 24, R. V.

(4) Faith secures eternal life, iii. 16, 36.

(5) Faith satisfies the soul, vi. 35.

(6) Faith is the unfailing remedy for heart trouble, xiv. 1.

(7) Faith is assured of a glorious resurrection, vi. 40; xi. 25, 26.

Nor, in the Gospel by John, are the action and the effects of *unbelief* any less prominent and decisive than those of faith. Let us note some of these also:

(1) Unbelief springs from a depraved and hostile will, v. 40.

(2) Unbelief deliberately rejects Christ's testimony, xv. 22-24.

(3) Unbelief is the sin of sins, xvi. 9.

(4) Unbelief hates both Christ and the Father, xv. 23, 24.

(5) Unbelief lies under God's wrath, iii. 36, and God's condemnation, iii. 18.

(6) Unbelievers shall die in their sins, viii. 24.

(7) Unbelief shall not see life, iii. 36.

7. The Teaching as respects the Oneness of Christ and Believers. It is here that we first—and until we reach the epistles—it is here mainly that we learn the precious truth that Christ and His people are united in one, that He is in them and they are in Him, as dwelt in by His Spirit. This glorious doctrine is brought to view more particularly in chapter xv. 1-8, in the figure of the vine and its branches, "I am the vine," the whole vine, root, branches, twigs, leaves, fruit; for Christ and His people are one. There lies back of this precious truth another on which it rests, viz., the gift to Christ by the Father of all those who believe on Him. And above all other books John signifies it by his repeated use of the word *give* (see vi. 37; x. 29; xvii. 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, etc.). There is the gift to Christ of all believers; the gift of eternal life by Christ to all believers, and the union of them with Himself. He says of His people, and the Spirit enables

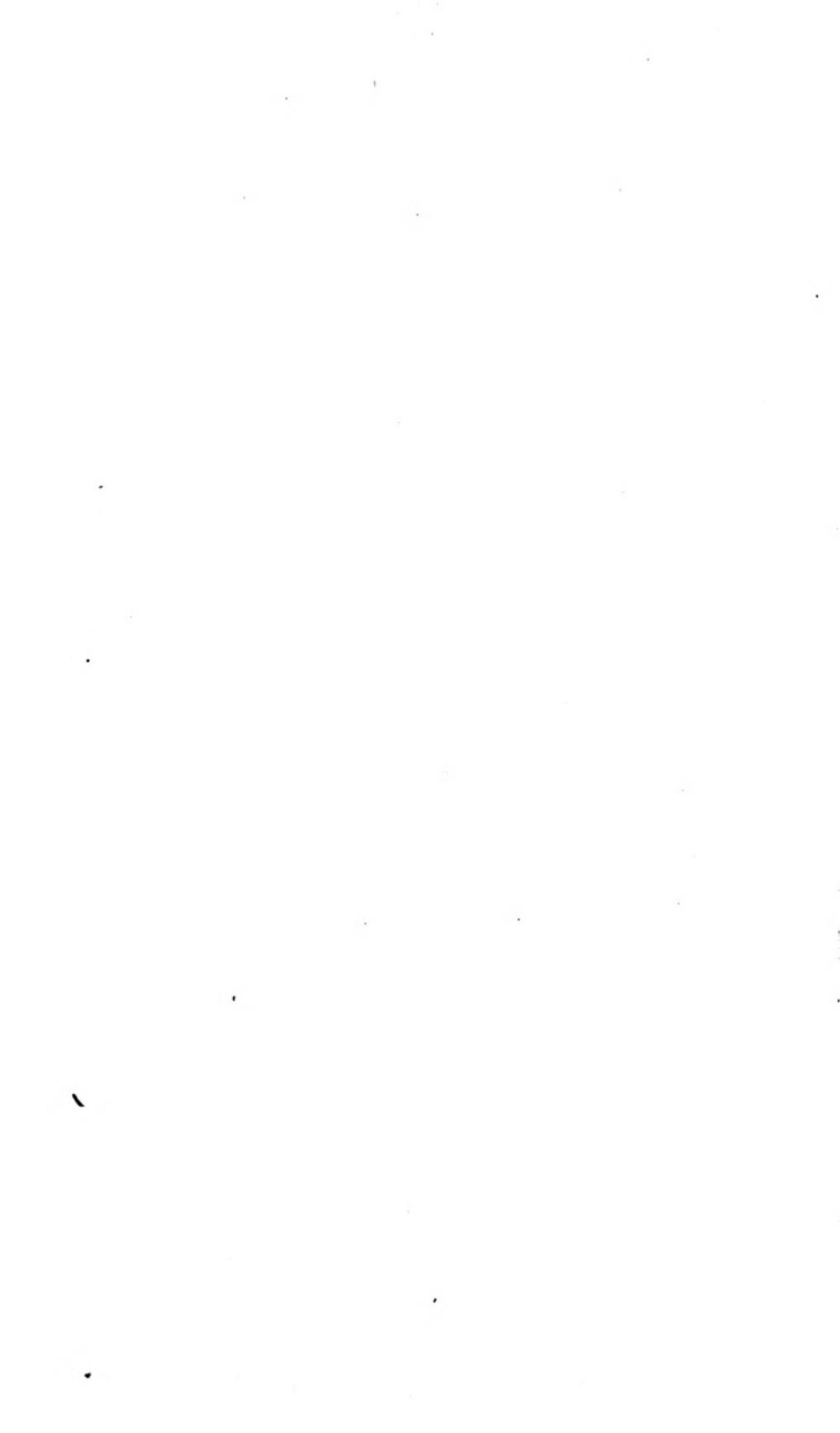
them to know it, “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (xiv. 20; xvii. 23). The assurance and joy that we are in Him is grounded on the other cognate truth, that He is in us. And this identity is so close and intimate that He is pleased to represent it by the ineffable union which subsists between the Father and Himself (xvii. 22, 23).

CONCLUSION

Here these studies in the gospels end. One reflection alone may be indulged—a reflection which has constantly pressed on the mind of the writer as he has pursued this great subject, viz., that the character of Jesus Christ, as delineated in the gospels, cannot be the product of the unaided human intellect. The portrait of Him which the authors of the gospels have drawn is that of a subject too majestic and too sublime ever to have been idealized by uninspired men. He stands before us arrayed in a beauty and a grandeur which dwarf “the starry heavens above us, and the moral law within us.” He shines forth with the self-evidencing light of the noonday sun. He is too great, too pure, too perfect, to have been invented by any sinful and erring man or set of men. His moral glories, which shine through all the pages of the gospels with a deathless luster, tell us of the presence of One in this dark and tearful world who is more than man; and they tell us, also, that the pens which traced them were inspired. Manifold are the external proofs in

favor of the integrity of the evangelistic narratives; but greater far and more manifold are the internal evidences of their inspiration. Jesus Christ is herein displayed as a divinely perfect character; perfect as a child and as a man; perfect in all His ways, and words, and service; in wisdom and knowledge; in grace and holiness; in nearness and distance, among friends and enemies; in life and in death. Jesus Christ, in all that He was while sojourning in the flesh, and in all that He now is in the highest heavens, is the one unfailing and unanswerable proof that the gospel is from God, that it reveals God.

God spake to the fathers in the prophets. He now speaks to us in His Son. In either case, whether by the prophets or by the Son, the speaker is God.



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